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LITTLE WHITE LIES

Truth & Movies

THE
TETRO
ISSUE

marek




**"THERE IS
ONLY ROOM
FOR ONE
GENIUS IN
THIS FAMILY."**

CHAPTER ONE
IN WHICH WE
DISCUSS
TETRO

TETRO MAY ECHO THE THEMES OF FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA'S PAST MASTERPIECES, BUT THIS IS THE RETURN OF AN ARTIST, NOT A LEGEND.





*IN REJECTING THE
DEMANDS OF SUCCESS
AND THE TETHERS
OF EXPECTATION,
COPPOLA HAS BEEN
SEDUCEO ONCE MORE
BY THE ROMANTIC
POSSIBILITY OF
CINEMA.*



A houseer draped across an Argentine street is illuminated by lamplight. "The wind sweeps the road," it reads, "you cannot go back." It was a sentiment that will come to haunt *Angelo and Ronale Tetrocci* as they learn to put aside the better memories of the past and embrace their future. But like so much in Francis Ford Coppola's films, these words are apposite to the life of the director himself.

At times it has felt as though Coppola will never be allowed to escape his past. A giant of American cinema, he has become enshrined and ensnared in history, carrying the burden of genius for almost four decades.

He was 15 years old in 1952. By the time he turned 40, he had changed the shape of American filmmaking. In less than a decade he produced four of the defining works of New Hollywood: *The Godfather* and its sequel, *The Conversation* and *Apocalypse Now*. Intelligent, innovative and audacious, each too was united by an unflinching commitment to the art of cinema, a restless passion that took their director to the limit, and then beyond.

These were the years of accumulation – of knowledge and experience, of reputation, mythology, power and wealth. Of an iconic status within the canon of American film that both sustained and enervated Coppola in the follow years that followed.

As cinema exhausted the appetite, Coppola became a self-inflicted

casualty in the war between art and commerce. Gradually bored and financially bankrupt, by the early '80s he was no more than a studio stiff for hire – a saccharine comedy here, a legal pot-boiler there – until finally earning unofficial amnesia.

At 71, Coppola has undergone a long and necessary transformation – a period of divestment to offset the greedy acquisition of success. The name, of course, remains and with it the sheaf of memory and reputation that connect him to the past. But as the director returns to filmmaking for only the second time in a decade, there is much that has been left behind.

The young man's conceit has been replaced with a more modest ambition, to return to the process of filmmaking of his roots, to the intimacy of *The Rain People*, made in 1969 when he was still a filmmaker rather than a legend. Coppola shot that film from the back of a mobile film studio that demanded innovation and flexibility. Now he's re-embracing that ethos of creative freedom, stripping away the complexity of the process in an effort to recognize something real.

And in doing so, in doing what other filmmakers of his generation have promised but never delivered, in rejecting the demands of success and the anthem of opposition, Coppola has been, if not so born, then re-enchanted – soiled once more by the romantic possibility of cinema. ▶

The result is *Tetro*, his first original screenplay since *The Conversation* – a poetic drama that evokes the genre themes of family, rivalry, dreams and betrayal but in a style and on a cinema far removed from the director's earlier great work. *Tetro* is Coppola's best film in a generation – low on budget, high on ideas, stylistically bold and thematically rich. With its three act structure and narrative drive, *Tetro* may not be an art film per se but with a delicacy of construction that belies powerful undercurrents of crime and tragedy, it is evidence that a cinematic art has finally returned to work – something many many thought he may be.

In the film's opening image, a moth is attracted irresistibly to light, establishing a current of morose self-indulgence that will dominate the film as haunted writer Angelo Tetro (Vincent Gallo) – a "genius without the accomplishments" – struggles to reconcile himself to the betrayal of his family.

The progeny of artists – his father is the great composer Carlo Tetro, his mother an opera singer and former beauty killed in a car accident

with her son at the wheel – Tetro has crossed the world to escape his past, hitching up in an Argentine skyline, his unpublished life story clutched to his chest. But the story leads us ending, one that will be provided by his half brother, Benicio (Aldem Echevarria), who has come to Buenos Aires to confront the sibling who abandoned him and fill in the blanks that have disrupted the narrative of his own life.

Benicio finds Tetro living with his girlfriend, Miranda (Maribel Verdú) in a small apartment in a bohemian quarter of the city. Here Tetro has carved a reputation as an untidy artist, the kind of man who will start a fight over the question of whether language is dead. Tetro is a wounded animal hobbling on a crutch, but where the cut on his leg will be removed, Benicio's vital response emotional fissures that will take longer to heal.

And as Benicio delves into the secrets of his brother's life and work, he too will be left irrevocably changed by the experience, even as he uncovers his own creative voice and offers Tetro an ending to both their stories.

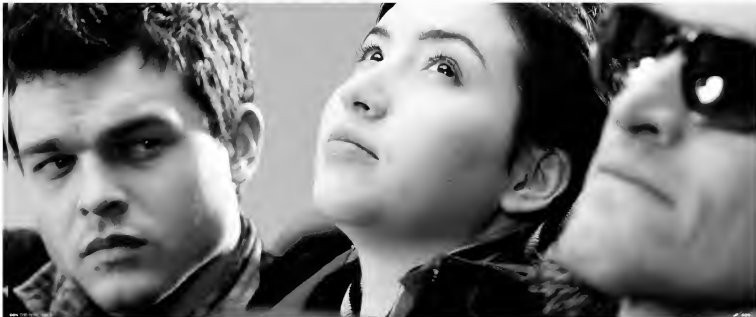
This cinematic – the shared journey of a sophisticate and an innocent – may echo *The Rain People*, but *Tetro* is a more engaging and refined piece of work. Shooting in gorgeous shades of black and white, cinematographer Misha Malashevich Jr. amplifies the romance and poetry of the South American landscapes from the street front coffers of La Boca, Buenos Aires to the mountainous backdrop of Patagonia.

It is Coppola's first film in monochrome since 1983's *Rumble Fish*, another story about siblings and their secrets. But where that film had a muscular tone to the high contrast photography of Tetro – influenced by the work of Antonioni and Kurosawa – is more poignantly beautiful and atmospheric. Indeed, the film is more successful as a mood piece than a drama, with its stunning compositions that capture the spirit of the city.

Coppola's boldest move is to let the film switch to colour at key moments where, as the emotional drama crescendos, the traditional language of cinema fails, just as words have deserted Tetro in the climax of his play.

Indeed, inspired by Powell and Pressburger's *The Red Shoes* and *The Tales of Hoffman*, Coppola argues into an impressionistic ballad to create a cinema of pure spectacle. This collision between the poetic and the cutting-edge (the ballads are enhanced by visual effects) sees the director engaged in establishing a new kind of experience, a total cinema in which different forms of negotiation – literature, art, theatre, music – come together to articulate a singular extraordinary vision.

There is, of course, an extra frisson in a film of Coppola's that evokes the themes of family, rivalry and genius. Tetro speaks to the director's own biography – his father was an award winning composer and musician, his mother an actress – but it is now Coppola himself who is the dominant figure within an extended family of artists. Or perhaps that paternal figure is the director's dialogue with his former self. If it is, after all, his own negotiation, not his father's, that now haunts Coppola in every movie – his own past that is the dominating force from which he's looking to escape. ▶





Accordingly, while *Tetro* is a film of great passion, it is surely a more sympathetic and reflective work than he would or could have made as a rebellious adolescent. Tellingly, when the brothers' secret is revealed, it is the older Tetro's regret, sadness and forgiveness that begin, rather than Brenner's rage and bitterness.

It is not only Coppola's history that is mirrored with the film. Vincent Gallo brings a brooding vulnerability to the role of Tetro, rooted in his own image as the rebel son of Hollywood. He approaches the part without irony but gives free reign to that seductive spark of solipsism. Framed by angular planes of black and white light, Gallo seems every inch the romantic rebel, the uncompromising visionary whose outbursts of passion are the stuff of legend.

In contrast, Alden Ehrenreich is the film's fresh face, a blank canvas on which Coppola has adroitly imprinted his mark. This is an extraordinary debut from a 20-year-old who holds the screen like a born star. Ehrenreich is the perfect foil for Gallo, offsetting his co-star's gaudy intensity with sleepy-eyed bewilderment. With his boyish looks and magnetic charisma, Ehrenreich will draw possible comparisons to a young Leonardo DiCaprio, but in Coppola's moody black-and-white bohemia, James Dean seems the more relevant comparison.

Of course there are flaws. *Tetro* is caught somewhere between pure art film and straight drama, without going far enough in either direction to succeed mainly. The final act might charitably be described as "operatic" in its excess, though "melodramatic" would fit the bill equally well. In fact, you could take a pair of scissors to a good portion of the last half-hour and

so shape it into something that felt more to the tone of the film's first half.

But any disappointments need to be taken in context. Coppola is one of a generation of directors who came of age in the 1960s. They dreamed of re-making Hollywood in their own image, with small-scale art films and personal visions. They succeeded in ways they could never have predicted, but it was that very success that took them away from the films they wanted to make. Today, while Scorsese reinvents into genre, while Lucas plays digital games on the Skywalker Ranch, while Friedkin and Bogdanovich fade away, Coppola is here, now making the kind of film he believes in. Maybe if the other Movie Bros followed him they'd make a better film than *Tetro*. But they're not, and they won't. Coppola can hold his head up. Because though you might not love the film he has made, you have to love the fact that he made it. **Matt Bochanski**

Amusing fact: Coppola is the legend who almost disappeared. Any new film of his is cause for excitement, but also perhaps for trepidation. **D**

Surgeon's tip: If film of stunning visuals and grand themes that veers slightly at key dramatic points. It may not be a masterpiece, but it is clearly the work of an impassioned artist. **B**

In retrospect: Coppola has returned with an uncompromising artistic voice. *Tetro* is worth a because of the film that most of his contemporaries are producing. **D**

**IF TETRO HAS MADE
YOU MELANCHOLY
FOR FILMS THAT
DELVE INTO A
DIRECTOR'S
PAST, TRY THESE
ALTERNATIVE
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL
CLASSICS.**



WILD STRAWBERRIES (1957)

DIRECTOR Ingmar Bergman

The story goes like this: Ingemar Bergman was enjoying a pre-dawn drive from Stockholm to Dalarna. The road took him past his childhood home of Uppsala. His by a sudden bolt of retrospective nostalgia, Bergman stopped at in the house of his grandfather. Once inside the house he asked himself, "What if I could suddenly walk into my childhood?" Thus inspired, he produced *Wild Strawberries*, keenly to reconstitute his best-loved manse (pace *The Seventh Seal*). The story of an aging professor on his way to accept an award whose journey comes to signify the passage from life to death, is touched by the symbolism of dreams and memories. It's here that the occasionally floundering director opened himself up to the possibility of meaning in his life, producing the most emotionally resonant film of his career.

8½ (1963)

DIRECTOR Federico Fellini

By 1963, Federico Fellini had become one of cinema's pre-eminent artists. Back-to-back triumphs with *The Strangers*, *Magnolia* and *La Dolce Vita* had cemented his reputation, and the world waited to see what he would do next. And so the world waited, Fellini fumed. The result was *8½*, a film about a floundering director (as played in a corner of his own making) — his life, loves and artistic quest spinning beyond his control. It is also, of course, one of the greatest films ever made, and as such lies at the heart of its autobiographical edge: it is the perfect distillation of Fellini's irony and self-mockery, but also of his imagination, his poise and his genius.

ALL THAT JAZZ (1979)

DIRECTOR Bill Ruess

If it's one Fellini's dyed red towards his own genius, *All That Jazz* is Bill Ruess's unapologetic death rattle wrapped in the glossing war that has defined his multi-decade career. The director of *Culture* died of a heart attack at the age of 49 in 1983, a decade seemingly predicted here as Roy Scheider's Joe Gideon valiantly attempts to balance the competing demands of a spurned family, neglected interests, hearted producers and his own muse while staging a spectacular song and dance show. Prepped up by a diet of pills but lacking desperately towards an amnesia, Scheider is the fall on Foster's funeral pyre in this giddy, vainglorious and unashamedly nostalgic film.

ALMOST FAMOUS (2000)

DIRECTOR Oliver Stone

Through out without an echo (first) the film's ingenuously cast as guitarists Russell (James Franco) but so the heart of the production) and a disengagement with the studio (Jennifer Casiano). Stone wanted to tell the film United's *Almost Famous* emerged as a warm-hearted and kindly left account of Stone's early years as a music journalist for Rolling Stone magazine. Beyond the autobiographical details and a seductive air of nostalgia, the film is accounted in the mappings and memories of filmmaker's life from the actual record collection he saved from childhood, to the loving recollections of the friends and family who influenced him. The result was the most charming film of Stone's career.

MY WINNIPEG (2007)

DIRECTOR Jay McInerney

Every movie from Guy Maddin is an autobiography of sorts, revealing the anxious, confusions and contradictions that lie within. *My Winnipeg* goes a step further, sometimes into the realm of psycho-geography, where the real and surreal, the imagined and the observed, the impossible and the inevitable collide and create in a queasy visit. Commissioned by the city fathers of Manitoba to make a documentary about his hometown, instead Maddin embarked on a personal journey of revision and revelation, transforming himself into the fabric of the city. What is true and what is false is irrelevant. Really it's the story of the artist's memory in this focused vision of the past.



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you die. Something risky and sublime, leave
behind to conquer time.

John Wolfgang von Goethe

CHAPTER TWO IN WHICH WE INTRODUCE OURSELVES

Wilde:

What is it you love about movies?

Francis Ford Coppola:

It is just the most diverse and complete art form that I know of - that uses everything; uses music, uses emotion, uses image, uses writing and structure. I often think that there's only been a hundred years of cinema and yet the amount of masterpieces that have been done are amazing. I can only conclude that the human race was waiting for the cinema so they could pour this out because how else could there have been so many great films even in the first 30 years? So it's sort of a divine collection of all of human aspiration and art forms. I often think, "What kind of movies would Goethe have made?" Because he was both scientist and poet and theatre person. Or other people in the past.

Mladen Ehrenreich:

Wow. You know what, I really... Movies have been so much a part of the way I think me and the people I know formulate values and a sense of the world and things like that. I think it also... Movies are a way of emphasising those aspects of real life or of imaginary life that don't necessarily get appreciated, and when you put a camera on something it's given a magical element of importance. I think that that's a beautiful way of reawakening audiences to the wonder of the world, whether that's a big fantasy movie or a small movie with a family. They're just a way to reinstate a magical sense of wonder in things, and that can be emotional wonderment, that can be sometime overwhelming, that can go to a very dark place, that can go all over the board.

I've never come out of a film that I've loved without some vague sense of reaffirmation in life.

I think that no matter what the story is, if it's a good story and if it's an interesting great movie then life will be enhanced in some way, the way that you come out of it and look at things.



Honest, personal and unscripted



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CREATIVE BRIEF



PHOTOGRAPHIC SELF-PORTRAIT



For our fourth Creative Brief, LWLies turns to the photographic community. The challenge is to take a black-and-white self-portrait that not only echoes the visual aesthetic of *Seto* as represented in this issue, but plays with the film's themes of memory, history and self-perception.

We want the image-makers to step out from behind the camera and show us who they think they are. Create a photographic self-portrait in black-and-white, use image and perspective to tell us the story of yourself!

As with our previous Creative Brief, the best entries will be featured in a special digital edition of *LWLies*, released on Friday May 28. We'll also be staging an exhibition of the best entries in East London. More details will be released in May.

We've already received some impressive entries. (Including the fascinating portrait of Grigora Junco, pictured right) but there's plenty of time to get your work to us.



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CHAPTER THREE
IN WHICH WE
DISCUSS
THEMES OF
UNCOMMON
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INSPIRED BY
OUR FEATURE
FILM



THE artists' cinema

*Vincent Gallo, Francis Ford Coppola,
Walter Murch and Alden Ehrenreich
put cinema back in the hands of
the mavericks...*

RAGING BULL

Friend and confidant David Michael goes one-on-one with Vincent Gallo, the movie industry's untamable bête noire.

*Words by David Michael
Illustrations by Stephen Mandel*





ow do you motivate a man like Vincent Gallo? He told me one time that when he's picking an acting role, the choice is centered around a simple equation: how much money for how few days?

Ever since our first meeting at the Cannes Film Festival in 2000, he's always addressed his acting or music roles appearances in this fashion. Take his outlandish drag queen performance in 1999's *Trickbaby*, for which he received "\$200,000 for three days to fund the production of six songs for Buffalo 66, having worked on the film for 14 months without salary." In his inimitable style, he goes on to describe the film as a "piece of shit" and its director as a "loser".

A chance meeting with Gallo in the Carlton Hotel at last year's Cannes, where *Zero* made its bow, was the first time I'd seen him since bumping into him at the wildly offbeat of Portia's Garden Sands holiday park, where

he had the honour of hosting 2004's *All Tomorrow's Parties*. On top of performing live with Sean Lennon, Gallo was also presenting the UK premiere of his minimalist, lovely-beats road movie *The Brown Bunny*.

Gallo's Cannes experience for *Zero* was an altogether more enjoyable and sober affair compared to *The Brown Bunny*'s debut in 2000. There's no doubt that his reluctance to do games for *Zero* was a direct protest at the treatment of that earlier film, when, as he says, he was "tamed and tamed" after screening an unfinished version.

He tells me that Coppola had requested that he do interviews with three French journalists as a personal favour. Checking them out, Gallo saw the previous vilification he'd suffered at their hands, prompting him to send Coppola a message asking him to Google the journalists and his name, and then consider if he should speak to them. Coppola saw his point.



Fast-forward a few months to the Venice Film Festival and the PR team organising the rare event of a Vincent Gallo interview have impaled themselves on his defences. Flustered and concerned (even later the Venetian villa. They're the best and most professional in the business, so it's strange to find them cowed. What's he been up to?)

Gallo is in town for *Melrose*, an amended Chevalier tale set in the near future. He prowls the scene of Roger, who navigates his way through a disorientating Europe where surveillance is everywhere and all the continent's underground taxi systems have been converted into a single gigantic subway.

Gallo has been playing mind games with his handlers. Apparently, they've been instructed not to say the words 'but', 'however' and 'only'. Reading between the lines, the words hold negative connotations. And he wants to see the journalists before he'll agree to be interviewed by them, to determine whether they are 'conscious or unconscious' of his work.

But once he gets started, so can you stop a Gallo interview in full flow. Twenty-minute sessions are doubled, tripled, even quadrupled. It's causing havoc with the scheduling but you won't find anyone else complaining. Because once you're in Gallo's confidence, there's no better interviewee in the business.



EWLies: Fairly, the two questions you ask when approached about an acting role are "How much?" and "How many days?" Mickey Rourke recently recounted the tale of you calling him up to do his small role in *Bullhead*. '66, and when he told you about his tax issues at the time, you offered him a brown paper bag with \$100,000 in it. Sounds like he used your funds.

Gallo: Yeah, and I expected it. I treated him like a man. Also, I gave him a little extra, and I said, "Here's a little extra, I want you to enjoy yourself while you're here in *Bullhead*." What did he say?

EWLies: He cited *Bullhead*. '66, along with Coppola's *Rumble Fish*, as small but important roles that helped him get back on the right track.

Gallo: Oh really? That's interesting — if I could have chosen to be in any of Francis' previous movies it would probably be *Rumble Fish*. Mickey in his best moments, Eric Roberts in his best moments, Gary Oldman in his best moments: these are our greatest guys of all time.

EWLies: Has anybody ever given you a little extra?

Gallo: No. People have just cheated me.

EWLies: After *Toto* you made *Melrose* with Tink Balch. That seems an unexpected choice for you. Was it outside the normal process of assigning roles?

Gallo: No, I negotiated the money and I negotiated the days down to the minimum. He came to terms with me. I showed up. Not that I was going to walk through it, but I came unprepared. But he was so looking nice.

EWLies: You felt guilty, didn't you?

Gallo: I felt guilty. For about 40 hours total of dubbing, I gave everything that I had. It's a wonder so I knew how to get the texture and find the voice. I discovered it after experimenting for about three hours. We found the character and then we went through the pages and I got familiar with what was going on.

EWLies: So there was no guile?

Gallo: None. There was no imagery at the time. I had no idea that my character was going to look like Gaetano Noé. If I had known that I would have fought against it.

EWLies: You would've asked for more money — double maybe?

Gallo: Exactly. I love Gaetano as a person, but I certainly don't want to look like him.

EWLies: You've always said that you don't relate to him as a filmmaker.

Gallo: The reason that I don't relate to him and a lot of other filmmakers of my generation is because of exactly that. I would never begin with an idea of something I saw in a movie and then build the whole film around that. I would let the film itself decide these things — for example my film *Pommes Witten in Winter*.

EWLies: What about being influenced by other film indirectly through your subconscious?

Gallo: Subconsciously you're influenced by the genre — it's not just the Western world of the twenty-first century or what you saw on the television. I love movies, but the movies I love are so far away from the movies I make. What I don't understand about Quentin [Tarantino], Wes [Anderson], Spike [Jonze], whoever they are, is they have this reaction to film and film history, and imagine themselves in film history [Kurosawa]. Harmony's such a funny and interesting genre, he should just be himself, because who he really is, is fascinating.

EWLies: They put themselves in context.

Gallo: Yes, that's what they're all doing, they're placing themselves knowingly in context. Gaetano Noé, you know what he said to me in *Caracas* [in 2000]? "I don't know if you know why I made *Brown Bunny*? It has nothing to do with being a professional." ►





**"PEOPLE
WILL
BREATHE
A SIGH
OF RELIEF
WHEN I'M
DEAD."**

Vincent Gallo



LWJ: He thought that *Brown Bury* was more provocative than *Inevitable*, when we spoke recently.

Gallo: He's out of his mind, because he's so stuck in his fucking point of himself in the context of cinema. He actually came up to me in the screening, sitting near me and saying things like, 'He-he-he, look, they booed me the same way. Me and you - this is great! As if that was my intention, or that I would enjoy that. I'm not a marginal person. I'm making, in a sense, classical films.'

LWJ: When you've intimidated people in the press over the years, it's humorous but there's a layer of honesty as to it too. Where do you think you intimidated them?

Gallo: I got that from Buffalo, from screaming on the streets and fighting for every piece of bread, or piece of honour I had. Protecting myself from being beaten up, mugged and having my father feel ashamed of me. You know, it's not my best quality, but that is not my best stuff. However, I'll say things to the press that are pointed, or let's say insulting, and there's a bit of logic and serenity behind those things - real humour and concepts. The truth is, I can't go in a hospital, I can't see anyone suffer. I don't like to see anyone punished. In the conceptual world, I can. I can say we should eliminate anyone caught drunk driving - they should be killed. Meanwhile, I can't crush a fly.

LWJ: Do you understand the appeal of provocation in art?

Gallo: I understand the impulse. That's how I began in performance. I began by crying in restaurant windows and upsetting the people eating there, that's how I got my first acting job. But I'm not a marginal person. Buffalo 66 is a musical, a classic Hollywood musical. *Brown Bury* is no more arty than a *Banana Bullock* film. When I'm on an airplane, what do you think I watch? I will sit and watch three *Banana Bullock* films happily and I'll cry from beginning to end. And in *Brown Bury* on some level, it's that same voice and connection. Maybe I think a little broader, but as a filmmaker, I tend to buy into these stories that we're brought up on in life.

LWJ: What feels your visual sensibility if you denote the idea that you're influenced by life?

Gallo: My visual sensibility goes back to very early in my life. I've had a very defined aesthetic point of view, always. The way that my bedroom was arranged at five-years-old is exactly like the hotel scene in *Brown Bury*. I consistently have a visual sensibility that relates to an aesthetic that's separate from cinema. If you studied my paintings or photographs from way before there was videotape, you'd see I'm not a person who's influenced by another filmmaker and then make a film. I'm a person who's influenced by aesthetics that I learned from things that don't relate to film, and put them in film.

LWJ: Are you interested in purity?

Gallo: I'm interested sometimes in this concept of life without people. The

immature has to do with the non-impact of humans on geography. The most beautiful thing to me in the world is a geography that's unfavourable to humans. Somewhere that has an aesthetic that is very attractive to me. Once I drove across country with my girlfriend and I said, 'I want to show you where we're going to build our house. We're going to build a very simple brown house on this beach called Bombay Beach in Salton Sea.' So we drove up there and there's trailers from the '40s and '50s underneath sand - rusted and decayed. No cars around, just filthy pollution and birds eating dead fish. And I said, 'Isn't this beautiful?'

LWJ: Your music tends to be symbiotic to your film work. Your album was going to be the soundtrack to *Brown Bury*, but then ended up a bit like David Bowie's *Station to Station* was to Nicolas Rong's *The Man Who Fell To Earth* - the soundtrack that never was.

Gallo: Absolutely. Only David Bowie didn't write the film and direct the film and photograph the film and edit the film and star in the film alone and cast the film and produce the film - he just got to be David. I felt that it would have been then redundant to get the music of *When Into The Brown Bury*. I mean, I photographed it, I scored recorded it, it would have been sort of... I've already been heavily criticised as a narcissist, so I guess there was some sort of self-consciousness.

LWJ: In terms of your heads you've had the misfortune of having a few plum deals, how has that put your own life into context?

Gallo: When I had my father's birthday, I knew I was confronting death everyday now. I've lost 10 of my closest friends, and it seems it gets harder and harder to make new friends. I almost live my life for the past 10 years now - as if I'm dead, and I get a chance to come back and just do things that needed to be done. Not come back and fulfil the dreams that I never got to when I was alive. No, God said, 'Okay, you can finish ya or memory list, you can finish pictures, the guitar collection [Gallo rates his in the top 20 in the world], you can finish that other film you didn't make, and then you've got to go back to hell or heaven.' You know, whichever one they got for me. That's how basically I live my life. With this opportunity, it's almost as if I haven't been given quite enough time to do these things, so I've had to double-time. The sense of agency is miserable and sometimes counterproductive because all I do is get ya' at people for not doing things right. No one likes me, no one is ever going to like me, and people will breathe a sigh of relief when I'm dead. That's what I feel like.

LWJ: You shouldn't say that.

Gallo: But I feel that way.

LWJ: But who would replace you?

Gallo: That's why it would be a risk of retail. In my will, I was going to have a billboard on Sunset Boulevard for a year that showed a picture of me dead - however I died - saying, 'Breathe a sigh of relief, Vincent Gallo is dead.' I wished somebody loved me, you know? ☹

BEATNIKS AND BACHELOR GIRLS

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discover film



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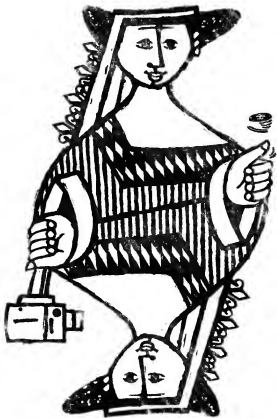
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days OF HEAVEN

With Francis Ford Coppola's production company American Zoetrope back in top, LNLies considers a world where artists reject the studios and drive moviemaking themselves.

Words by Kingsley Marshall



B

rike aren't lending, buyers aren't buying, and Wall Street picked up and left our party long ago," observes film finance consultant Jeff Steele. But the withdrawal of Wall Street money from Hollywood following the credit crunch has seen a positive outcome; a rise of what the trades are describing as "boutique" or "angel" investors. Often wealthy individuals, they are serving more as old-fashioned patrons to the arts than the risk-bracket financiers of the '80s, who, as Steele archly notes, strove only for "safe and unthreatening commercial films."

The result, as demonstrated by the year's awards slate, has seen artists reclaiming filmmaking from the studios and a resurgence of genuinely interesting ideas beyond the fast-talking conservatism of A-list and other so-called "indiewood" pictures.

This is far from a new phenomenon. Even before the dawn of the studio era, actors and directors had attempted to escape the clutches of established producers and distributors. United Artists was founded in 1919 by heavy hitters of the period: Mary Pickford, Charlie Chaplin, Douglas Fairbanks and D.W. Griffith in an effort to reinvent control over their careers. The formation of the company reportedly prompted Richard A. Rowland, then joint-head of Metro Pictures with Louis B. Mayer, to comment that the lunatics were taking over the asylum.

Ultimately, Rowland's cynicism of the artists' ability to manage their affairs would be proven right: UA drifted in and out of profitability until it eventually collapsed under the weight of Hoover's Great in 1933. Director Michael Cimino's obscure shooting ratio implied the budget and sunk the studio, sending it into the hands of MGM. So while we may celebrate the creative managers organizing their own artists' paradise, we must also wonder whether such a system can ever work.

You may not have heard of Sarah Siegel-Magness and her husband Clay Magness, but without them *Previous* may never have

been made. After the major studios rejected the story and Lee Daniels, himself a producer of *Monster's Ball* and *The Woodmans*, had struggled to raise the production capital elsewhere, the couple provided the entire \$12 million budget in spite of having received ideas to the contrary.

As Siegel-Magness revealed later, a number of consultants had considered them "crazy for financing an African-American movie about incest." But the pair had worked with Daniels on *Tennessee* in 2008, and were so taken with him that they agreed to produce it a follow-up despite their first talking at the box office. "We never just wanted to write a cheque. This was our shot at being part of the film industry," she stated.

"Part of the success or failure of *Previous* lay with Lee's finances having left him to it, which is very rare in a world where films are made by committees," explains editor Joe Kloos, whose credits include well-received indie features *Juno* and *Charlie Stobbs*. Daniels' like. "Lee answered his own vision, making the film the way he wanted to make it. When you work on independent films there's a lot of creativity in the ideas and what people are trying to say. That kind of work is more interesting and challenging for both the film crew and, ultimately, the audience."



As United Artists had battled with the studios during Hollywood's so-called Golden Age, so the 1980s unveiled another new paradigm in American cinema. The New Hollywood offered a space where filmmakers again managed to wrestle control from the big studios, and again changed the direction of the movie industry. The result was some spectacular movies, and some huge flops, but moviemaking would never be the same again.

Catalyst to this period was the formation of American Zoetrope, a studio that counts *Apocalypse Now*, *Straw Dogs* and *Coor in Translation* amongst its catalogue. It was originally founded by Francis Ford Coppola and George Lucas in order to escape the LA studio system.

"The idea of the image was demonstrated for us, as we were the first generation to have grown up with television," recalls Walter Murch, one of a dozen people who — together with Coppola and Lucas — made the trip up the coast to San Francisco in order to establish the studio. "Film didn't only exist in the almost churchlike space of the picture palace; we were used to seeing film at home and the idea of trying to get into movies wasn't quite as daunting for us as it might have been for the previous generation."

"As a teenager I hadn't been crazy about motion pictures, and had seen a similar number to anyone else who had grown up in the 1950s.

HOLLYWOOD FILMS WERE MADE BY COMMITTEE, THEY WERE ALMOST INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS.

Even then, I was only aware of Hollywood time that were made by committee, almost industrial products. This was countered by the surge in world cinema such as it was shown in New York at the time. Those films — from France, Italy, Sweden, Japan and India — felt like dumbbells. What I felt was the impact of a personality — they had a personal aspect that I just didn't feel in Hollywood film."

The galvanizing effect of world cinema drew Murch to California and the indie environment of the USC School of Cinematic Arts. The cohort who graduated with Murch made like a Who's Who, including Lucas. Sent To The Future producer Bob Gale and director Robert Zemeckis, Award writer Dan O'Bannon, John Milius, who went on to write *Apocalypse Now* for Coppola, and Caleb Deschanel, who served as DP on *The Night Shift*.

Fine school provided the catalyst for a more European mindset, and created an environment that almost operated as the antithesis of the Hollywood system, as Murch explains: "We were all doing multi-disciplinary work in as many aspects of the craft as we could and as a group, wanted to bring the sensibility that had gripped us in world cinema to the films we made as Americans, to personalize our films, the subject matter and the method of making them."

Technology also played a role. "In the previous decade, all of the equipment used in the film industry had been purpose-built by the studios themselves. As it had to adhere to very strict technical requirements, the market was very small, and therefore extremely capital intensive. The effect of electronics was like an engine acting on technology. Having reduced the cost of film equipment so much that it became affordable for small studios and kids like us who had just graduated. If anything, that is wildly more persuasive today than it was back then. The fact that you can use a Canon still camera, which costs something like \$1600, as a high definition motion picture camera, and instead that stuff with footage shot on film, is something that would have been hard for us back in the 1960s to think about."

Somewhat ironically, the money that drove American Zootopia came from a major studio. Warner Bros. had provided the start-up costs as part of a development deal. Ironically they immediately demanded back when the studio's first picture, Lucas' experimental 1971 sci-fi *THX 1138*, was screened. History repeated itself like United Artists: Coppola's company filed with bankruptcy and was ultimately rescued by studio cash, this time from Paramount, and the notorious arrival of *The Godfather*.

But Zootopia steered up the industry, even as those involved found themselves corrupted by the system. And as mavericks by committee reasserts itself today, so renegade artists and producers are once again beginning to seize control. Producer Nicolas Chartier raised enough of

RENEGADE ARTISTS AND PRODUCERS ARE ONCE AGAIN BEGINNING TO SEIZE CONTROL.

The *Mut Locker*'s eventual budget of \$13 million in pre-sales to successfully apply for production loans, but found himself rejected by every one of the major banks, and reportedly mortgaged his house to get Kathryn Bigelow's film, his first feature film release, into production.

John Lee, an associate producer on the film, recalls that part of the problem was the myriad Gulf War movies released to lockstep box office, and the lack of star quality attached to the film — critical to Bigelow's desire to instigate an uncertainty in the audience as to the safety of its bomb tactics. As such, as Lee explains, Chartier sold the film as "an action thriller, based on Kathryn Bigelow's history of *Point Break*," in order to find funding.

"The independent financing was absolutely critical," explains Bigelow. "To be honest, all of my productions have been technically independent, though this one gave me the most autonomy that I've experienced and I don't think we could have made it under any other circumstances. I can't imagine a studio sanctioning the production, but that gave us complete control and the opportunity to cast emerging break-out talent — like Jeremy Renner — in lead roles."

"No producers or executives interfered in the film, even as the film was picked up by a major studio, Summit Entertainment, after we had finished it," adds the film's editor Chris Lewis. "Nicolas Chartier and Tony Mark saw it was a tight, well-oiled film, and had the good sense and respect to let us do our job and to leave us virtually alone. That would be almost unheard of in a studio setting where everybody from baby executives to their secretaries would have their noses in between, if not entirely forced down the throats of the director and editors. A screenwriter would not be allowed into that setting either, as they would be considered just another voice that the executives wouldn't want to collaborate with."



"I was amazed that *The Mut Locker* and *Preyous* were getting so much acclaim," says Joe Klotz, "as they are challenging films that don't press all of the Hollywood buttons. There was nothing more exciting for me, having worked on so many independent films that have struggled to find an audience, than to go to the opening night of the film in Manhattan. People were fighting for seats and the theater had put in office chairs and overturned popcorn buckets all the way up a 100-foot aisle in order to accommodate them."

There's plenty of life in indie cinema yet. Despite the runaway nature of the anti-producers — the cost overruns, creative demands and bloated shooting ratios that have marked their tenure — long may the mavericks continue to rule the asylum. ☐

THE



Francis Ford Coppola surveys his empire.

*Words by Matt Beckwith
Photography by Tim Christman*



W

hout Francis Ford Coppola there is no cinema. From a horse's head to an offer you can't refuse, from the smell of napalm in the morning to Mary Crawford's paranoid emulsion, Coppola has created some of the defining images of American film.

He is history, tragedy and immortality. But he's also, at 71 years old, a grandfather embarking on the third act of a remarkable career, able to look back at his life with a new perspective and attempt to come to terms with what, if anything, it might mean.

"I know it's hard to believe this but most of my films when they first came out were not received well," he says. "I never had success when I was younger. With the exception of the first *Godfather* making a lot of money, I was never the golden boy of the movie business in my time. Later on, somehow as a joke almost, things I was extremely suicidal about turned out to be... "His voice trails off as the words fail. "And that's the same thing now. Nothing has changed."

Seated in the corner of a Polaris bar, Coppola is an unlikely symbol of the hubris and genius of a generation. In a smart suit and he looks every inch the businessman he was forced to become when the creative spark of the 1970s was doused by the debt-burdened dullness of the '80s and '90s.

Back then, everything changed for Coppola. His work in the 1970s made him a legend, but by the time he finished *Apocalypse Now* in '78, he had experienced his own personal *Nova*, the possibilities of youth extinguished in the madness of a Philippine jungle.

It's here that his story entered a long and painful second act. "When I made *Apocalypse* nobody would let me do it and I had to ultimately borrow the money myself," he recalls. Having infused everything on his vengeful epic and the disastrous *One From The Heart*, for 20 years Coppola's creative muse was shackled by debt. At 40 he was bankrupt, and the ash menards became a hawk for him, forced to accept of solo psychiatry.

"I was in a tough spot," he admits. "I had a huge loan - almost a science-fiction kind of a loan. It was like being a hoarder. I had to come up with a payment every October for \$3 million because the money that was our home was being held by the bank." The result was a protracted low point in Coppola's career, when the director of four undisputed classics of American cinema eked out the likes of *Piggy*, *Sun Girl*, *Marek*, *Obscure*, *The Remaker* and *Jack*.

Of all the sins to be laid at the door of the banking industry, turning one of America's finest directors into a whore is the most perverse. "I would always try to find something to love because I don't think you can make a film if you don't love it," says Coppola, "but from age 40 to 50, I bitterly blew that decade." He steadily withdrew from the film business, focusing on his winery, his restaurants and resorts - working his way out of debt while cinema lost two decades of potential greatness.



The success of Coppola's invention as a wine merchant can be felt today, and not just because he lobbed adobe the walls of the bottle just a short walk from daughter Sofia's apartment. It's the success of that business that has allowed him to return to filmmaking on his own terms - self-financed, self-distributed and with a commitment to making the kind of small-scale, personal films that first inspired him all those years ago.

That he's returned at all is testament to his self-confidence, which survived the critical slings and arrows he suffered during his years in the wilderness. Indeed, "I was always working under doubt," he claims. "The *Godfather* and *The Conversation* were made under total doubt - I never thought that I had more movies on those films than I had later. In fact, later I felt that I had more confidence and more understanding of what I was doing than I did before. I never worried about having lost it but I always worried about having had it."

It's no proof that Coppola has it. If it doesn't compare with the zone films of his past in terms of scale and ambition, it is definitely the work of the same artist. Like *The Godfather*, *Solo* explores the timeless themes of family, rivalry and jealousy, but here Coppola's more interested in the material - less epic but more intense and focused for it. ➤

W



I WAS IN A TOUGH SPOT. I HAD A HUGE LOAN. IT WAS LIKE BEING A HOOKER... FROM AGE 40 TO 50, I BLEW THAT DECADE.

The story of two brothers whose lives are affected by the disowning genius of their composer father, it is inspired in part by his own experiences growing up in an artistic family, and by becoming that figure to his own children, Sofia and Roman, who both went on to become filmmakers.

Coppola, however, has a much more in-depth relationship with the material. "When you were something personal you tend to be all the characters in it." But it has certainly made him reflect on his relationship with his own kids. "To me, a good parent emerges their kids even though that means they're going to walk away some day. Those parents that want their kids around them maybe aren't good parents because they haven't given their kids the means to be independent. My kids don't need me, you know?"

But that hasn't always been the case. When they were growing up, Coppola kept his kids close, taking them out of school whenever he went away to shoot. "What happened is that they got the wonderful training and confidant with the movies, like circus kids, they just knew how to do it," he remembers. And when the time came for them to make their own movies, he was anything but the distant, disapproving force with which Vincent Gallo's *Tetro* must contend. "It was very encouraging to my kids and when I spotted talent I would go to whatever extreme to help them get the financing or get the distribution. I never had an egoistic thing like in *Tetro*," he says. And besides, Sofia and Roman's careers launched at a time when their father's was stagnating. If anything, says Coppola, "In the child, my kids didn't grow up working under my shadow, but I am."



Coppola's affinity with the work of his children is reminiscent of the camaraderie he shared with the other Movie Brats of the '60s—Lucas, Scorsese, Friedkin, Bogdanovich and Schrader—who consistently inspired one another to reach greater heights. He sees something of the same spirit in filmmakers today. "When you think of Guillermo del Toro and [Alfonso] Cuarón and that, they're competing but they're friends, and that was the case for us. That form of friendship and collaboration and competitiveness is a wonderful ingredient in any art movement," he continues, "whether it's political or artistic or they learn on sets like Lars von Trier—Dogme and what have you—those are wonderful, youthful expressions."

Of course, the youthful exuberance of the Movie Brats didn't last forever. Some burned out, some faded away, others were redrafted by success and found themselves absorbed into the mainstream they had set out to subvert. "When we were young we all talked about having a big success, even doing a commercial film and having it make a lot of money so then we'd have the money to go and do little personal time," admits Coppola. But today he's the only one who still seems committed to that vision.

It's something that clearly frustrates him, especially in the case of his close friend George Lucas. "George in particular, it's like, I know what

a terrific, experienced filmmaker he is," says Coppola. "If he went off and made little \$4 million movies everyone would be shocked because they now downgrade him as someone who makes huge films. And being that he's a little bit like a younger brother to me I always say, 'George, you got plenty of money. Go make these little experimental films.' And he always says he will but the truth of the matter is I don't know what happens that makes it hard to return to what you said you wanted to do when you were young. I don't understand it in his case because he is so talented and he could do it."

As for Scorsese, who regresses even further into the world of the studio-funded blockbuster, "I think he really is close to it and the second something breaks in the sky that gives him the chance to make one of the personal films that he is full of and it is so good at and everyone wants him to do, he will."

You can't help but wonder if Coppola feels a sense of regret over how it turned out for himself and his contemporaries. Success may have given them untold rewards, but it also became a gilded cage—something that happened while they were busy making other, better plans. But he argues that his only disappointment is with the business itself, that it isn't better for young filmmakers now than it was for them.

"It was tough for us," he says. "There was no one saying, 'Make these kinds of films.' We were just trying to be opportunistic. But as bad as it was then, it's even now and that makes it the bad because you think that the success we all had and the money it generated for the system and our influence would have changed it for the people who are in their twenties now. But I guess for every generation it has to be a struggle," he adds. "And you know, maybe the new generation doesn't need it. They're full of talent; they love the cinema."

Coppola is beginning to get restless. There's a whole day stretching out ahead of him and there's so much to do. These days, like *Tetro*, he's focused on untangling the stories that have been batted up inside for too long. He tries to write every day, discovering the process all over again, and learning to be patient in his old age.

"We're very impatient with ourselves as artists," he says. "We're very quick to say that something we're doing is bad or terrible but the truth is that you've got to work with a tolerance for time and to let what you're really doing bubble to the top. It's like cooking. If you take something and you just worked it and ate it you'd say, 'That's terrible.' It has to bubble and then what's good about it comes to the top. That's true about writing and filmmaking too."

For Coppola, the more reflective approach is opening up an exciting final chapter in his career. But perhaps unsurprisingly for a director who has experienced such staggering highs and disastrous lows, he remains perplexed by the nature of his achievements. "Achievement is such a weird thing," he says. "For me, achievement is, 'How I made time that people will look at in 50 years?' That's the real achievement. Have I made films that help me understand life?"

Coppola is one of the few directors who can rest assured that he has done both those things and more.



THE LAST PICTURE SHOW

Wrote by Matt Beckwith
Photographs courtesy of Saba Kurts

In the mid 1990s, Argentina was shaken by a financial crisis that would recur and reverberate throughout the decade. Ariel Saba Kurts remembers it keenly. "We lost everything," he recalls. "We got repossessed—they took the furniture, the telly, everything. We ended up on the street."

Only one possession remained: a shoebox containing a handful of family photographs, fading memories of happier times. But as the economic crisis deepened at the turn of the century, Kurts took the decision to leave Buenos Aires, fleeing to Spain where, after working as a construction site, he eventually brought his family to join him. The shoebox was forgotten.

Years passed in which Kurts found the space and freedom to become an artist. His photographs examined the past and the future, exploring the tension between memory and expectation. In 2007, after almost a decade away from the country, he returned to Argentina with his parents, and they rediscovered the shoebox, safe in the hands of extended family.

The pictures it contained were now damaged by age and exposure to water, but looking at them with an artist's perspective, Kurts realised that the photographs had come to symbolise "the story of Latin America—how we consistently live in crisis with ups and downs, how you can lose everything from one day to another."


In this "encounter with the images that are my memories", Kurts saw fragments of a lost and uncertain reality coalesced into something both fragile and profound. The photographs speak of the artist's forgotten past and rescued narrative, of self-image and family history. Of the precarious meeting between memory and the middle eye.





"It's like I'm carrying all my past in a different kind of present. I didn't want to leave my country or my family, so to make this cultural and economical change come with a lot of new feelings and expectations - a lot of new hope."



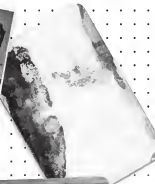


Some of my memories of what I see
in the pictures, with all the damage
that the water did, I see my memory
like that - with that damage in
the image. And the damage adds a
melancholy that maybe wasn't there
in my memory. But now, because
of that damage, that ruin, I look at
it a little bit sad sometimes.



"Once I felt the freedom to start with photography, I began to represent all my experiences in the past and try to make it into a better future. I don't want to be a victim about my life. I want to look forward."

"What I try to pass to my kids now is something beautiful about the friendship and the family values that we had there. I don't want that to end with me, I want it to pass to my children."



A

As a boy, Francis Ford Coppola didn't picture himself as a filmmaker. From an early age, the theatre was the playground for his mind and he would nurture his embryonic passion during extended spells bedridden with polio. Having his skills as a playwright throughout the course of his education, Coppola fell into filmmaking after observing the directorial process from the rafters of countless college productions.

The rent is a factory all too adamantly favoured, but despite the dogging path his career would take, Coppola's theatrical experiences stuck with him, evolving into a larger ambition that would lay the groundwork for his latest endeavour.

Time marks a highly personal return to storytelling for Coppola (including a scene in which Vincent Gallo's playwright watches

a theatre production from the rafters while working the lights), but it is also the recognition and natural extension of a beloved cinematic ideology.

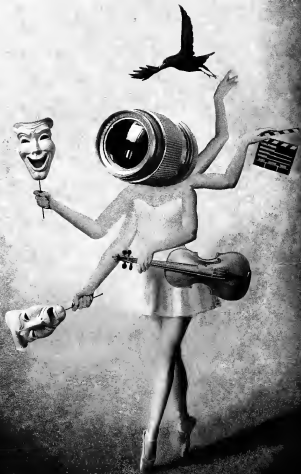


Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger fanatically labelled cinema as an absolute work of art; a minimal fusion of cinema, dance and language, both spoken and written. In particular, Powell called for a 'composed cinema' that structured the interplay between the director, actors, location, set design, mise-en-scène and story as a demonstration of the synchrony of art. Powell and Pressburger realised what would later be termed 'total cinema'. ▶

From Powell and Pressburger to Antonin Artaud and Francis Ford Coppola: tracing the confluence of 'total cinema'.

Words by Adam Whitehead Illustration by Sylvia Ogata

EVERYTHING IS cinema



Cinema du Cienno editor Andre Bazin touched upon the notion of total cinema in his posthumously published four-volume essay *What Is Cinema?*, in which he suggested that the medium's primary function was to represent reality in a pure and unadulterated form. He claimed the celluloid was the richest source for artists to define and further undefined the inherent traditions of the pre-cinema arts. Bazin revered the not-yet-modern work of Powell and Pressburger, suggesting that the technological advances that had pushed cinema towards artistic prominence in the latter half of the nineteenth century were superfluous to the basic desire of film-making artists to show the world in its truest light.

Fifty years after Bazin's seminal theoretical study, cinema is supposedly on the precipice of a new age, with critics and academics alike heralding the 3D revolution. Although *Tetro* is not a direct nod to the preference of mainstream spectacle cinema, it is a resounding call to arms to the total cinema that Bazin begrudgingly dismissed as a myth.



Contrary to Bazin's rejection of technology, Powell and Pressburger utilized new cinematic techniques (specifically camera and sound enhancements) that far surpassed those accessible to theatre productions of the time. Consequently, the writer-director pair were able to blur the margins of observed reality with what would become a disorienting surrealist art design, conducting several cinematic ballets that would transform the medium.

In transporting their audience from the ancient theatre stage through the Technicolor labyrinth of Victoria Page's mindspace in *The Red Shoes*, Powell and Pressburger allowed their imaginations to run riot. This 17-minute sequence set a precedent that would culminate three years later in their reinvention of the Jacques Offenbach opera, *The Tales of Hoffman*, and again in 1955, in Powell's short *The Dancer's Apprentice*, which took off as a mesmerizing 30-minute solo ballet by Bulgarian ballerina Bori Arava.

Putting aside the synthetic choreographies of their films, Powell and Pressburger took the process of total cinema very seriously. Powell's art is one man's war waged as his insatiable pursuit of perfection. In striving to achieve authenticity in an emotional sense, Powell sought resonance beyond cinema, drawing influence from cultural traditions which were well regarded within their respective arts – indeed, Powell had planned to develop Balu Stalerman's one-act ballet *The Moscowian Menzies* with the stylistic ornamentation of Picasso, Stravinsky and Mahler.

To ensure the highest degree of artistic integrity, it was imperative to Powell and Pressburger that they cast dancers who could act rather than actors who could dance. While Maria Stalman, a dancer with no prior acting experience, led the line in *The Red Shoes* and *The Tales of Hoffman*, so Coppola used professional Argentinean dancers in *Tetro* to play out his film's operatic disavowment. Accordingly, the six-minute sequence – shot on blue-screen in explicit contrast to Mihai Mădărar's lit back and white cinematography – is the epitome of a collaborative effort between Coppola and a wide range of professionals, all employed for their artistic prominence.

Much like Powell left the artistic design of *The Red Shoes* in the hands of a painter, so Coppola entrusted the performance of



TETRO IS A CALL TO ARMS TO THE TOTAL CINEMA THAT BAZIN DISMISSED AS A MYTH.



Tetro's ballet with Ana Maria Stalerman, one of Argentina's most renowned choreographers. For Stalerman, the task was to structure the dance in a single symphonic breath, an expansive yet self-reflexive moment that would be the quintessence of total cinema. "We had to try to fuse things with modern dance in a way that would allow us to breath life into this catalytic act," explains Stalerman, "to shape it into a reflective entity that would echo Tetro's narrative themes."

While the story of *Tetro* was in part influenced by Coppola's own past, it is the personal history of the lines of Stalerman that is so essential to the film's tributes to the total cinema philosophy. "I am Buenos Aires," says Stalerman, "the city has in me and it is because of this that I was able to choreograph the [ballet] just how Coppola wanted."

Of course, visual style is just one facet of total cinema. As the fruits of Stalerman's visualization ripen, the film's ballet is driven by the gift of another Argentine, musical director Gonzalo Gajoy, who previously composed the score for Coppola's *Youth Without Youth*. "In *Tetro*, the music must be resonant with the whole theme of the film," suggests Gajoy. "So while most of the film's music comes from a physical place, from the picturesque streets of La Boca, Tetro's neighbourhood, in this ballet it is more metaphysical. It required a very different rhythm and that is where you start to see more European influences."

While *Tetro* scores with a jazz born on the streets of La Boca, Gajoy has taken great care to source influences from further afield. Resultantly, the score is distinctly unformulaic. Classical music is infused with the melody and rhythms of the Buenos Aires countryside to create a classical, orchestral score that is at once traditional and modern in its arrangement.

As a coalition of non-film creators, *Tetro* is Coppola at his most edify from Hollywood. Its poetic themes are punctuated by the near-missed names of Vincent's *Rocco and His Brothers*, and Fellini's *Wishy Washt*, while many of the film's key characters are directly inspired by real life literary figures – writers whose work was testament to genius, but whose personal lives were marred by crippling neurosis. The spirits of cursed poets of the twentieth century of JD Salinger and Arthur Artaud, an uncinematized as the observations of *Tetro* and his neurotic, estranged younger brother Barba.

Indeed, it was Artaud who aimed to create a kind of total art, which he would later refer to as the "Theatre of Cruelty." He believed that text had become tyrannical and rejected the physicality of theatre in favour of a more spiritual engagement with its audience. In his book-essay *The Theatre and Its Double*, Artaud condemned theatrical convention for numbing its audience. To Artaud, imagination was reality. His ideal theatre was ultimately experimental, expansive and, crucially, embraced its capacity to affect each person.

If *Tetro* represents the ultimate augmentation of Artaud's total theatre as a platform of art in its myriad forms, it does so as add to Bazin's belief in cinema as both the start and end point of cinema. In his desire to synthesize a diverse array of art forms, Coppola has realized total cinema as an organic, symbiotic process.

In the spirit of Powell and Pressburger, *Tetro* adheres to the fundamental ambiguity of cinema and, in the film's climactic ballet sequence, as its ability to project realism through a landscape of illusion and dreams. ☺



EASY RIDER

Cruising the rebel highway with American boy Aiden Ehrenreich

Words by Matt Buchanan Illustration by Paul Willenroep



ON HIS BIG BREAK

"If you see the video that me and my friend made, it was basically a joke for this guy. It's not a short film or anything. It's loosely an homage around and around and trying on girl's clothes and doing a bunch of silly stuff. When we showed it to our moms they said, 'You really look good! It's funny!'"

"Then these three or four girls that I knew a little bit from school called me out of giggling, and said something to the effect of Steven Spielberg saw something and they were all laughing. I was 14 so that's a big deal for people getting out of school and I was just, you know, surprised."

"And then my mom got a call at home from his right-hand woman at Miramax, and she asked us to come in for a meeting and said there was a project that Steven was interested in me for. She sent me to a couple of agencies to figure out how to get an agent. We were still a little bit away but because of how nice everybody was, we felt comfortable."

ON LIFE CHANGING

"The entirety of the situation up through now has not to be fully absorbed and may never be fully absorbed. It's still a little foggy than year. It's really what I dreamed of my whole life in a way. When I was three or four my family would show me all these westerns and what first and I just loved them. I didn't want to be a part of movies. I mean, I know I wanted to be an actor but I didn't want to start professionally."

"But the fact that Steven Spielberg and Francis Ford Coppola — two of my favorite directors — to actually get to participate and be involved and can only dream, you know? It's still a bit to absorb."

"I never thought that I would have the kind of accolades to these people that old into the movie world by these people who I have so much respect for you can only dream, you know? It's still a bit to absorb."

"I mean, when I met Francis, 'You're without your head?' came out and I didn't even know he was working again. I felt like, 'It would be an honor if I was, son of the first director that I thought about in sophisticated terms. Then I actually got to work with him, it's just really unbelievable.'"

very actor was she to get ahead, but now have done a lot. 10-year-old Adam Dornreich has the kind of taste that will pass into legend, and the story to match.

At 14 he shot a video for a Bar Mitzvah, and a friend giving around trying on dresses and doing that. This was in West Hollywood where every water has a movie script under their arm — and what came out was straight out of one of them. The film made its way to Steven Spielberg who saw something he liked in the young lad, got him in for a meeting.

That's a funny thing to say for a boy who loved Hook growing up. But it's only part of the story. There was all those years of hard work, education and audience adoration denied. Dornreich only has been granted the looks and charisma of a star, but it was the grit that earned him his place at the table.

With "Turn" under his belt, his career is about to begin in earnest. It was Spielberg who allowed him entry into Woodland, but only Dornreich can determine how far down the red carpet he is prepared to go.





ON WORKING WITH COPPOLA

"From the second you meet him he doesn't come into the room as Francis Ford Coppola the great maestro. He's like a sweet, loving, warm, smiling person who really just completely connects with you and isn't trying to impress his reputation on you in any way."

"In terms of a working relationship, my role was... he knows everything a lot of rehearsal and improvisation so that our voice becomes part of the tapestry of the film in a genuine way."

"But because he's clearly so brilliant I was able to let go and give over all the control, which is what I really aspire to do as an actor. It helps the way that I work -- I don't like to be procrastinated with having control over things. If there's something that doesn't sit right I just try to make it fit and I don't come out of anything."

ON VINCENT GALLO

"I don't know what other people's but my experience of him is that he's extremely charming. He has an intimacy on screen and an intimacy in his movies that's certainly genuine. But what I think isn't as obvious as much as a really beautiful sense of humor, which is his leading characteristic when you meet him."

"I think we both had a certain camaraderie and I definitely learned a lot from him on set because we didn't have insiders or anything so we were hanging out this whole time and I got to ask him questions and ask some questions."

"He was so disinterested in you -- if he let that you were really present and really committed to the work you were doing and with him it was like, 'Oh, just with him, he would be... I mean, there were times when he was like, 'If you're not happy with the scene I'll refuse to go home and we'll just keep going. He really would make sure that you felt that you got everything you could possibly get. There was someone when he was just saying, 'Is there anything more I can give you to help make this better for you?'"

ON HIS CAREER

"You have to stick to the kind of work that you genuinely want to do. Don't have a procrastination with self-protection, with trying to create an image of yourself. You have to take a moment-by-moment -- the same way in life if you're not at a party or something and you're procrastinated with, 'How can you be a better guy if you just connect one-on-one with each person you talk to and be open and genuine.'"

"For me, it's the same thing with work. If I do only the things that I feel are interesting to me and that I feel excited and that I feel passionate about, then I don't think I'll have to try to control my image because you are what you do. As long as you do work that you're proud of."

ON THE TEMPTATIONS OF FAME

"I grew up around a lot of people whose parents were involved in movies and that's a very nice introduction to the way that Hollywood works because the kids aren't so excited because it's just death and dust. So I was around it authentically and I just think it's an old story -- the coming down the stage in the compromise with the roles and all that stuff. It's not appealing to me for my life. I don't do drugs and I have a lot of nice friends and I'm in college."

"I know that's a little boring but the kind of thing that's satisfying for me is to be able to express myself in radical ways and explore different ways of doing that." @



ONE FROM THE HEART



Jealousy, rivalry and disappointment define the filmmaking families where bile runs thicker than water.

Words by Tom Seymour



filmmaking is a playground populated by the rich and connected. In this battle royale, the balance of power tilts towards a few core individuals augmented by their most entrenched and resilient of beasts, the film dynasty.

Repositories of familial power, examples of dynasties are legion in Hollywood, from successive generations of Coppolas to the Douglases, Fords, Hustons, Barrymores and Conradsonslans. Bollywood has the sprawling, vertically integrated Kapoor and Chopra-Iskhar families. In England, oligarchs like the Redgives, Pimms and Scotts cast their long shadow over the film industry.

But what is it like to be born into this contest? To have a cinematic legacy to protect and serve? Does the pressure that parents exert on their offspring increase as their status levels when it comes with the public eye? And, away from the West, what is it like to carry a family torch dampened by the dogma of censorship? Worst of all, what happens when one generation just gets jealous of the next?

MARLENE DIETRICH & MARIA RIVA GERMANY, AMERICA

Maria Riva's career spanned more than half a century and included over 100 productions. Her mother was Marlene Dietrich, the German-American actress who became one of the most iconic and controversial screen presences in the history of cinema. Riva was Dietrich's closest companion, confidante and eventually caretaker, and fought through the courts to uphold her mother's reputation after her death. But it came at a price. "As a child," she once said, "I thought my name was Maria The-Daughter-Of."

Dietrich was egotistical and difficult — a different breed of star. But in 1984, only two years after her mother's death, Riva published a biography that blew previous embellishments out of the water. While filling just short of a hatchback job, her account of the rise and fall of a iconic film star was a shockingly graphic exposé.

Riva depicted a woman as delusional as she was talented. Brilliant but untinged, utterly self-absorbed and occasionally mad with jealousy and insecurity, Riva's Dietrich makes Sunset Boulevard look like *Nothing Hill*.

In one now infamous passage, Riva obliquely describes how, as an adolescent, she accepted the disturbing and harmful sexual advances of one of her mother's female lovers. Later in the book, Riva postulates whether she was purposefully placed in this situation, Dietrich hoping that her daughter's indiscretion would leave her impervious to any man's charms and, therefore, more singularly devoted to her mother. When Riva told her mother she was pregnant (Riva's son, J. Michael, is now a big-time production designer whose recent credits include *Spider-Man 3* and *Iron Man*), Dietrich responded with a gang-bang cry: "Children bring you nothing but trouble!"

TEMUR, GÉLA & GEORGE BABLUANI GEORGIA

In the early '60s, Temur Babluani, the celebrated Georgian director of 1981's *Gravel*, sent his two young sons Gela and George to France, away from the civil war that raged in their home country. Considered by the authorities as a 'loyal' filmmaker, Temur had provided his boys with a masterclass in Soviet cinema with habitual trips to the theatre in Tbilisi. "The same childhood memories often come back to me, fixed images, like rays of light, which cut through the darkness. Those images are always vaguely present," Gela has said of the influence it exerted.

Despite this, Gela of Temur's film, *The Kite*, *Killing* (1976) *Flight of Sparrows* (1980) and 1992's *Cassiopeia* (in which he acted), were censured by the Tbilisi Cinematographic Studio, a Stalinist institution that expected wholly sympathetic social realist films both to practitioners.

His final solo film, 1992's *The Sun of the Sparrows*, spent seven years in production and, on its release, won the Grand Prix at the 'Khitav' Open Russian Film Festival and the Silver Bear at Berlin. A surrealist, occasionally comic drama set in Tbilisi, it portrays an urban environment of regressive social decay. Despite its success, the experience led Temur to claim he had quit directing. "He must have felt something was wrong with cinema," Gela commented.

Temur's re-emergence came in the shadow of Gela, who gained emotional fame after writing and directing his debut film *33 Tamaris* in 2009. Winner of the Grand Jury Prize at Sundance, and starring younger brother George in the leading role, it is what in a spartan soundtrack with beautiful editing that recalls the great Soviet movies. juxtaposing the innocence of an impoverished young boy with the masculine callousness of an older generation, *33 Tamaris* is a wonderfully subtle disavowment of the violent excesses of capitalism, where anything is possible if you pay enough.

The father-son relationship led to the dual authorship of *The Legacy* in 2007. As suggested by the title, this seemed to be the opportunity for both father and his sons to confront their nation's perilous past, or maybe to reveal how misunderstood it is. Again set in Tbilisi before venturing to the Georgian heartland, the film follows three French youths who become caught up in an ancient blood feud between real families. It seems, in a suddenly globalising world, that the Babluani's own brand of cinema specialises in the clash of inter-generational and familial values.

DARIO & ASIA ARGENTO ITALY

Asia Argento has one of the most recognizable faces in European cinema. Notorious for her rebelliously sexual on-screen persona, she is also Italy's youngest female director. Her father is a certain Dario Argento, enfant terrible of Italian cinema. Revered and derided in equal measure, the founder-ghost of giallo, co-writer of Leone's *Once Upon a Time in the West* and producer/actor/producer for Romero's *Dawn of the Dead*, Dario can be credited for turning elusor films into art. Asia's mother was an actress, and her grandfather was a producer. Her pathway to the antechamber of Italian cinema was paved with gold.

But Asia, who suffered from agoraphobia and ran away from home at 14, has repeatedly depicted her childhood as lonely, depressing and painful, and has made no secret of the strains in her relationship with her father. She told *The New York Times*: "Temur acted out of ambivalence, I acted to gain my father's attention. It took a long time for him to notice me - I started when I was nine, and he only said me when I was 16. And he only became my father when he was my director. Sometimes I think my father gave me life because he needed a lead actress for his films."

Dario first directed his daughter in *Taormina* (1965), where she plays an American girl in search of the man who killed her parents. Dario, however, has been evasive about their relationship, once telling an interviewer: "[As a child, she had some very demanding roles, and then I asked her to act for me again and we made *Taormina* together. We then went on to make many movies with each other. It's very rare, in cinema, for a father and a daughter to work on so many films. Very rare. For me it all played out beautifully, naturally."

PYOTR & VALERIY TODOROVSKIY RUSSIA

Valeriy Todorovskiy, now in his forties, was a child of perestroika. He lived through the fall of the Iron Curtain and became one of a new wave of post-Soviet Russian directors who, due to increases in box revenue, were able to wield much larger budgets. His *Hipsters* (2006) was a big-budget, internationally distributed blockbuster, part of a new spectacle cinema that began to replace the stark realist aesthetic so central to Soviet film heritage.

But it departed from Soviet cinema in another, more fundamental way. Set in 1995, it portrays a group of counter-cultural youths who, at a time when starting an Elton haircut was an offence worthy of arrest, were dedicated to the 'Western' high-life. They dabble in jazz, wear alternative clothes, take drugs and practice the Kama Sutra.

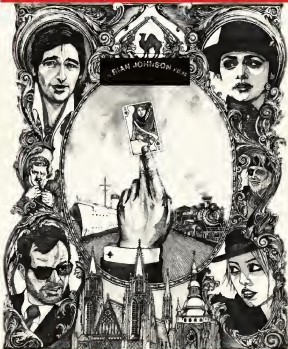
It was a rejection of the social control the Russian state exerted over its citizens. As Russian critic Arseny Trifonov stated, "[*Hipsters*] is a profoundly anti-state film, and this is what actually makes it good. Freedom, reason and honesty - these things are absolutely incompatible with the Russian state, at least in the way that I know it from the times of Leon the Terrible to the times of Vladimir Putin."

And yet Valeriy's father, Pyotr, was a celebrated and patriotic filmmaker, awarded the Merit of the Fatherland by Putin in 2000. Taking to Russian paper *The City*, Pyotr once said: "Our generation was different. Censorship pressed upon us as hard that even today the ex-editor continues working inside. Valeriy is a quite different person, a free person. I was constrained."

"This generation is quite different. They want to participate in festivals, get prizes. We made films and didn't think about money. They are freer than we were; both their hands and tongue are freed. It would be good to learn how to use them." ☺

A CON MAN MOVIE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF BRICK
RACHEL WEISZ ADRIEN BRODY MARK RUFFALO HINKO KIKUCHI

THE BROTHERS BLOOM



12A PARENTS STRONGLY CAUTIONED
Some Material May Be Inappropriate for Children Under 16

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EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS JEFFREY M. HARRIS
PRODUCED BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS
WRITTEN BY JEFFREY M. HARRIS
DIRECTED BY BRIAN JOHNSON

the PARALLAX VIEW

Words by Kynedy Marchant

The film editor possesses cinema's all-seeing eye. In an effort to shed light on the 'invisible art', EW.com covers the angles with Francis Ford Coppola's long-time collaborator Walter Murch, District 9's Julian Clarke, Precious editor Joe Klotz and The Hurt Locker's Chris Innis.





n his darkened room, the editor has the power to slow or speed the pace of a film, to add drama or tension to a scene or to rearrange sequences entirely. In the edit suite, decisions are made 24 times a second, where the addition or subtraction of a single frame can change the meaning of a scene, and where, through the edit, a cinema audience can share the subjectivity of a bomb technician, soar high above the shanty towns of Johannesburg or be guided into the imagination that allows Clarence 'Precious' Jones to escape her abusive Harlem home. In this one-off masterclass, we ask the movie industry's most respected figures a question: what makes a good editor?

"A sense of how to tell a story and an innate sense of rhythm," explains Walter Murch, who remains most famous for his editing work on Coppola's *Apocalypse Now* as well as his pioneering sound recording on *The Conversation*. "Editing is visual music, and all of the sensitivity to rhythm and pitch exist in the flow of images. The process itself is similar to the way jazz musicians perform, in that there's a general melodic framework that you're trying to get across in how the scene has been written and shot, but exactly what sort of shot you'll use and where you'll cut, those things are improvisatory at the moment of doing them."

"That you have to be patient," he adds. "You'll work for 14 hours a day, six or seven days a week, seeing the same stuff over and over again. Frequently something isn't working, and you have to keep trying to figure out new ways of making it work. That's true the first or second time, but you have to be prepared to do this 16 or 17 times just for one scene. Multiply that by the number of scenes you have, and add in the interaction between scenes and the restructuring of scenes, and you have to have a high level of patience."

Debut 3 editor Julian Clarke, days away from looking the cut of *The Whistleblower* with Rachel Weisz, agrees. "Editors find facts to shake themselves into a new perspective, even after you've been working on the same thing for many months," he says. "I find showing it to someone who hasn't seen it for a while or an outside witness can shake you up and help you avoid settling into the malaise of accepting something as being good simply because you've become accustomed to it."

"Another big part of the role is serving as a figure of impartiality," says Clarke. "Understandably, the director has a clear notion of what their film should become, particularly when they've written their own screenplay. They then suffer through the war zone of production, where they may have had to fight with a line producer in order to secure a certain shot, and they can become emotionally tied to that footage. In my experience, editors don't have the same

kind of baggage, and can be objective about what is and isn't working. I've found that it's good for the editor to be a little far from creating the movie."

Joe Klett, whose work on *Precious* was critical in balancing the tone of the film, concurs. "It depends on the director but, in my experience, an editor is a lot of times the friendly ear in a production. You have to really be measured, but the editor is often the person who can help them hold a film together."

Murch explains the process he uses in the early stages of constructing a film. "My particular method involves a lot of preparatory work. I screen the dailies at least twice, making a record of my first impression and then taking more detailed and considered notes in the second screening. I kind of let it all around in my head, trying to get some glimpse of how I might put a scene together. Once I start to edit, that process becomes much more intricate. A peculiarity of the way I work is that my first assembly is done without any reference to the sound. I'm taking the scene to be visually clear, whether you can understand through body language and the intensity of the performance something of what is being told. Once I've put that together, and maybe refined it once or twice, I'll turn on the sound and see what I've got."

"A good editor will often sit through all the footage trying to find the best moments, finding things that even the director, actors and the writer weren't necessarily aware existed," adds

Chris Lane, who picked through the huge shooting ratio for *The Hurt Locker*. "I'm the only person

on the entire crew who has watched all

cut a scene any way I thought would work for the film. The material called for a range of styles but literally anything went, and I was doing things I'd never done before like long dissolves, the use of title and abstract cutaways. He'd be sitting at the edge of the couch and, after a while, it was my goal to make him fall off that couch in shock and disbelief!"

Murch explains how he manages the masses

of material that arrives in the edit suite

"When I'm beginning to work, I manufacture an index card



structure for the film. Essentially I work with coloured cards and different coloured

inks, so for a sad scene I use subdued colours where emotional scenes have more vibrant colours. The card is bigger if the scene is longer, and I use a diamond shape if I consider it to be pivotal. When you look at all these cards together up on the wall, the flow of colour tells you something about the emotional geography of the finished film, and I can get a pretty good sense of how something is going to work when we drop or transpose scenes, and what's going to be a good transition aesthetically."

As someone who has championed the use of new technologies, including the pioneering use of Final Cut digital editing on *Cold Mountain*, this is perhaps a little surprising. "I tried to do it digitally but I didn't like the results," he admits. "Glue

300 hours or so of it. Kathryn

Beglow had said that there was no off switch on the cameras, no editorial was the only off switch. I have always believed that it's better to give editors more time to absorb the material and to refine it before a director gives his or her notes anyway, and this film proved that theory to be true."

"I wish everybody worked like Lee Daniels worked," echoes Klotz. "He set up a creative environment and would allow me to

and screen a kind of makes

it more friendly. So much of what we do is digital and on the screen, it helps the general atmosphere to have a number of things that are made by hand. ▶



"The wonderful thing about this particular line of work," he adds, "is that it's like a little R&D department where you're trying to examine various aspects of human perception, figuring out what works and what doesn't, and when you can and can't get away with it. It's similar to what magicians do, in that they work on this complicated dance between human perception, focus of attention and timing in order to produce the illusion. The editor is basically doing the same thing."

Murch recalls an observation he first made while editing *The Conversation*. "I discovered that some of the cut points I had made intuitively coincided with points where Gene Hackman happened to blink. At first I thought it was odd, but I'd happened to read an interview with John Huston where he talked at some length about the idea of a film edit as a blink."

I realized that where we choose to blink has something to do with what we are thinking and, though I absolutely don't believe that you should cut every time an actor blinks, there is a similarity between where people blink in real life and where a film will cut from one shot to another.

"Each shot is a thought or a sequence of thoughts and what becomes significant is those moments when the editor chooses to bring that thought to an end through a cut. To get more sophisticated, someone who doesn't blink a lot but who seems to blink in the wrong places strikes us as not really participating in a conversation, perhaps because they are thinking about something else. By extension, the blinks of an actor like Gene Hackman, who is so deeply in his

"I am a believer that rebirth is an inherent part of the fabrication of a film and, in order to be reborn, something has to die," says Murch. "What I mean by that is that the ideas, emotions, images and sounds collected in the dimensionless world of the script have to then be entered and reborn through the three-dimensional and temporal world of shooting. These ideas and emotions then re-emerge through the two-dimensional world of the edit suite, where time and the manipulation of the image can flow forwards or backwards at the editor's discretion."

"Each of these discreet stages operates like a different language, with their own strengths and weaknesses and the editor is tasked to reinterpret the work of the previous language in terms of what you



can achieve in the present. The problem that any translator comes up with is that, in order to really translate one language to another, you have to betray the original language in order to both be true to the ideas underneath the language, and to the particular language that you are dealing with at that moment."

As someone who has also served as writer and director before he began editing, Clarke agrees. "There's a real connection between the writing process and the editing process, in that you are in control in so many respects: There are limitations, of course, imposed on your writing by the budget you have and on editing through the material that has been shot, but both roles still offer an incredible blank canvas — of how you can affect the story as a single person without needing a huge amount of resources."

"Being on set is the complete opposite, where you need this kind of military apparatus in order to accomplish anything: time is limited, money is limited, locations are limited and with these finite parameters, you work on what you can get. Writing and editing are points where you can take a step back and be contemplative, where there isn't that time in production where there is the immediacy of making decisions and moving on."

"Each film is a new life," suggests Murch. "The wonderful thing about filmmaking is that every project is different in terms of the personalities, conditions and technology involved, and all of the inherent excitement and uncertainty that comes with that inevitably there is some discovery that you are going to make about the system, the process or yourself, and those variables are so great that there's very little danger of repetition." ☺



part, are falling in the right place for that character, as he is thinking the same thoughts as his character."

"It's funny that you can find those bits that can really help you when you have an entirely new idea and are trying to change the meaning of what's going on in the scene," adds Julian Clarke. "The actor may not be doing anything in those moments before action has been called, where they're just waiting with a neutral look on their face, but you may be able to read something into it. It doesn't happen too often, but there's been more than one instance where I've ended up using something like that."



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CHAPTER FOUR IN WHICH WE REVIEW THE LATEST FILM RELEASES



[REC] 2



REC 2

Everyone's a critic nowadays -- and when it comes to this super speedy sequel which padders with lewdie, shifty-eyes scenes and what-the-hell narrative about turns, they're all going to have the proverbial field day. Perhaps they should.

Here's what they're going to write: [Rec 2 is a computer game movie clicking like a hypersensitive teenager between POV footage shot by the SWAT team investigating the original film's questionable Barcelona apartment block. They'll read off the intercoms (*The Exorcist*, *The Exorcist*, *Demons*, *Friday The 13th Part 10*) like anything's 100-per cent original any more. They'll pick apart minor plot gaps while ignoring the beauty of the structure as a whole -- and they'll give away all the good bits for nothing. That is, after all, what these critics paid to get on.

But out in the real world [Rec 2] might be the scariest flick of 2010. For here is an arthouse, technically phenomenal and almost fanously tense sequel that levels itself every leap of faith a scintillating attempt. As Dr Owen (Jonathan Meller) and Jaung-ho gun team sweep the arctic building, weapons out, panic-stricken breathing hammering the speakers the doctory (some might say Doomy) atmosphere does indeed feel like a first-person shooter: you're up. So? Computer games can be just as unimpressive as films, and this no-nonsense device puts us smack-bang in the centre of an unlikely first storm.

And what a storm. As black-eyed, war-mashed infernos old and young hurt themselves relentlessly at the camera, director Jaume Balagueró and Pico Plaza use subjective sound, with red,

split screens, do-no, broken lenses and upends down imagery to delight and disorientate in equal measure. 'Record is off, camera is the SWAT team's pre-mission routine, and on a technical level alone there's no denying this is the most accomplished camcorder horror ever made. Indeed, when the frame finally goes black for five long seconds as the camera is pushed back and forth between characters and stairwells you won't know whether to fill your lungs or your pants.

There'll be no spoilers here -- despite the more extensive plot embellishments, we already know who's up there in the attic, and genre fans have definitely ridden pangs of that rollercoaster before. But how often do we see filmmakers going to such lengths to up their (already impeccable) game? And how often does a lowly horror

sequel have the scenes to branch off into different but interlinked directions, clambering all downtime and leaving us, flabbergasted, back where we began?

Far too good to be dashed: a guilty pleasure, [Rec 2] is a phenomenal, if not-for-everyone, second offering that forces audiences to keep pace or get left behind. It's a fearless franchise-building effort, unafraid to throw everything at the screen to see what sticks. And what does? Almost everything. So go find out for yourself. **Must Glimpse**

Anticipation. The original [Rec] was one of the scariest films of all time. Hands up who wants to see some more? **1**

Enjoyment. Holy cow! Better, better, better! **1**

In retrospect. The 2007 horror sequel since *Saw 2* *Dr. Doom* **2**



24 CITY

Director
Zhang Ke

Starring
Zhang Ke

Emerging as one of China's most important contemporary filmmakers, Jia Zhang Ke announces his, fiction and fantasy to reveal the true nature of a country and people in this 24 City follows 2004's *The World* and the Golden Lion-winning *Still Life*, in its meditative approach to narrative where memory, memory and documentary evidence into an impressionistic new cinema.

In Chengdu City, Sichuan, a factory is being decommissioned. Formerly a top-secret manufacturing plant for the Chinese air force, the site is now being redeveloped into a landmark apartment block, codenamed 24 City. Zhang Ke's camera dispassionately follows the process of destruction and

upheaval, in the factory – and the fabric of the community it supported – is demolished.

The film's largely static compositions are at odds with the furious pace of change in Chengdu, a telling symbol of the new China where certainty has been traded for opportunity. The psychic impact of this change is related through talking head interviews with (fictional) workers – the mothers, daughters, fathers and lovers whose lives have been uprooted. They speak of loss, of broken promises and faded hopes, and yet, Zhang Ke seems to be suggesting another factory that once gave them purpose is reduced to a shell, the strength of their memories will outlive the disposition of physical things.

Change and progress is the great narrative of twenty-first century China. But Zhang Ke is more interested in the human perspective – the burden of sacrifice, the power of nostalgia, the gulf between young and old. Is this disorienting filmmaking? Not exactly. There is certainly a scepticism in his portrait of Chengdu's youth, the personal shopper who travels to Hong Kong and weeps when she sees her mother in the factory, the newsreader visiting the finished apartment block. But the subtlety and complexity – not to mention the fantasy and mystery – of the director's work makes him hard to pin down.

This is outstanding filmmaking – an attempt to distil the essence of

an age from the inside, to cut through the white noise of emotional turmoil and uncover a deeper truth. Zhang Ke's methods, that strange mingling of fact and fiction, may not be to everybody's taste, but the results are both singular and extraordinary. **Must Bothersome**

Anticipation. Jia Zhang Ke is not just a poet, just philosopher, just filmmaker. He is one of the best filmmakers in contemporary Chinese culture. **1**

Belonging. 24 City is a novel that not a delicate portrait of a country in flux, but it is also a gripping tale to pin down. **1**

In the moment. Exhilarating, beguiling and haunting. You might not be able to pin Zhang Ke down, but his work is invaluable. **1**

WOMEN WITHOUT MEN

Directed by
Cyrus Nowrasteh
2003
Drama
108 min.

Exploring human suffering with a subtlety of magical realism, *Women Without Men* returns to the Anglo-American coup of 1953, which deposed the democratically elected Prime Minister Mossadegh and sowed the seeds for the '79 revolution.

New York-based Shirin Neshai's directorial debut is a richly visual work that draws on her background as a photographer, attracting the attention with its saturated palette and artful framing. Yet it is her reproduction of 1950s Tehran that most catches the eye: from the glamorous American cars and the ceremonial pomp of the Shah's generals to the communists, artists and entrepreneurs huddling around



sidewalk in coffee shops and discussing poetry in upstairs restaurants.

All of this is ingeniously window dressing for the film's emotional core, which examines the repression of womanhood in Iranian society through a series of interlocking stories. Marziyeh (Shahrooz Tahi) is a housebound political activist Parvaneh (Fayaz Paryoon) a devoted Muslim on one of Marziyeh's controlling older brother, Zarni (Khadija Taheri) is a skilled prostitute held hostage by her screwing random in superb turn by Shahrooz Parspour who wrote the book on which the film is

based) and Fakhri (Anita Shabnam) is a middle-aged lady fleeing a loveless relationship with one of the Shah's officers.

The lives of all four converge as they escape the capital and start anew in an orchard that serves as a symbol for both Paradise and the idea of exile as forced upon them by the Shah's death. Yet this same reliance on symbolism is ultimately the film's undoing. Certain scenes are striking enough to burn themselves into memory, but as the orchard begins to blossom, the second half of the

film falls into an extended and increasingly clunky metaphor in which flowers of political and sexual betrayal blur and become indistinguishable. **Cyrus Shabnam**

Anticipation. Hearty subject matter makes this a big draw for cinephiles and others. **D**

Engaged. A stirring start, but flashes of magic are soon used in metaphor. **C**

In Retrospect. A film that backs its under the weight of a grand ambition becomes a muddled if not entirely misadventure. **D**

THE HAPPIEST GIRL IN THE WORLD

Directed by
Laurence Boyce
2003
Drama
108 min.

Jean-Luc Godard famously said that the cinema is truth 24 frames-per-second. Ben Hachtcock may have had a point: when he described drama as "life with the dull bits cut out." *The Happiest Girl in The World* shows us two worlds: one is seemingly dull and mundane, the other a glitzy place of forced smiles. The former is by far the most fascinating.

Eighteen-year-old Delia (Andreea Bornea) has won a luxury car in a competition. All she needs to do is drive to Bucharest with her family to film a commercial expressing her joy at winning the prize and all her admiration for the city that helped her win it. After a long journey she finds herself on set with a bewildering



array of people getting her to do exactly what they need for the commercial to look perfect. In between are ever-increasing number of takes, she argues with her family. They want her to stuff the car in the hope it will lift them out of poverty. Delia wants to keep it. As the arguments increase, Delia finds it ever more difficult to play the part her producers want.

Occurring in (almost) real time the film makes much play of the filmmaking process as Delia is forced to repeat, drive and time again, that she is now

the happiest girl in the world.' As first this repetition is funny then annoying, before finally drifting onto the scales of the absurd as the filmmaking crew grows ever more desperate. Compared to the febrile of the commercial, the languid scenes with Delia and her family are infused with a tender honesty and angst.

Rada Juki's studied direction adds to the sense of deliberation in this slow but immensely elegant movie, which is helped by some understated acting and a genuinely engaging chemistry between the

family. A portrayal of family life and a study in both the filmmaking process and consumerism, this is a low-key and curiously delightful little gem. **Laurence Boyce**

Anticipation. After some modest shots Rada Juki has been talked up into the past few years. **D**

Engaged. Slow proof with an occasional but of absurdity it does you and keeps you interested. **C**

In Retrospect. A welcome breathers from cerebral usual. Don't miss nature. **D**

HARMONY KORINE: DARK AND BOUNTIFUL INTERVIEW BY SHELLEY JONES

FILMOGRAPHY HARMONY KORINE

Tastemade (2011)

Waterbury (2010)

After Baby (2010)

Amor (1997)

There has been a rather significant change in Harmony Korine since we last encountered him producing *Mean Lonely* in 2007. He and his brother-actress Rachel Korine, who played Little Red Riding Hood in *Lonely* aged 23 — have had a baby. So now he's back, after two years, with his first feature film since the epochal event, *Tooth Hangers*. You have to wonder how fatherhood has affected the provocative filmmaker.

Age, or the lack of it, has always been intrinsic to the work of the Nashville-based director. He wrote the screenplay for Larry Clark's *Kids* when he was just 19 years old. The stark portrayal of NYC skateboarders in the '90s was rumored to be loosely based on Korine's own friends. While dating all-teen star Chloe Sevigny he was introduced to the *Beautiful Losers* art collective by old friend and pro skateboarder Mark Gonzales. Through the twisted indie celluloid that followed — *Gummo* and *Juicy Donkey Boy* — he pretty much established himself as the voice of dysfunctional American youth.

Now he's made a generational hop and become a dad (he has perspective change)? And will this new film show a marked departure from his dark, disillusioned roots? "I don't know," shrugs Korine ambiguously. "I just thought there was something very creepy about old people doing these sorts of things... I guess I just started imagining the scenario of making a film that was, like, an ode to vandalism or, uh, destructive forces."

Tooth Hangers does nothing to dilute Korine's hardcore reputation; in fact it totally reaffirms it. There is nothing child-friendly about the 78-minute "home movie" that follows a group of elderly delinquents, quite literally, fantasizing with garbage. So much so that when a red belly — possibly Harmony's own, although he won't confirm or deny it — enters the scene towards the end of the film you can't help but cringe and feel repulsed.

Themes of corruption and loss of innocence are at the forefront, but Korine is quite clear that his film does carry a message. "It's weird, when I make films I don't feel out to make a comment on much," he says. "It's sometimes just to walk from the inside out. Something like [*Tooth Hangers*]. I didn't really want to question. I've bought it out of a place that was very unconscious... I just closed my eyes and went with this idea."

Korine is a poster boy for the kind of mislive cinema. Although he denies following rules to make *Tooth Hangers*, his methods recall the Dogme 95 movement — of which his 1992 drama *Juicy Donkey Boy* is officially with or a bit created by Danish pioneer Lars von Trier. *Tooth Hangers* was shot entirely on location with Korine and his band of prosthesis-faced miscreants sleeping under bridges and hanging out in derelict buildings, and his stripped back, documentary style suggests a sort of putty outlined in the movement's manifesto.

But Korine, in typical fashion, rejects the idea that the film belongs

anywhere at all. "We weren't following any rules in this movie," he says, "but in some ways, there is a similarity in the way that I was made. Really what we were following was the idea that it was an artifact, that it was a tape that had been unearthed. I wouldn't even call it a movie. Maybe it's just something that was found in a ditch somewhere and someone just stuck it in their VCR and pressed play."

Korine constantly blurs the line between fantasy and reality, with a dedication that transcends filmmaking and even his self-mythologizing in every situation: interviews, press releases and conversations. His magnificence is dark and bountiful. "I had these neighbors, these identical twins who are now both in prison, one of them for murder," he reveals. "One of them lost fetal alcohol syndrome and when they would get injured they would wrap themselves in duct tape and tin foil and tap dance on stolen concrete cubes. Sometimes their parents would start a barbecue in the backyard and we'd all listen to the soundtrack of Finer's *Rainbow*."

Korine challenges his audience. He teases and tempts them in a devilish way that mixes a more savvy and active viewer participation. The devil, in fact, is a constant theme in his work and persona. Not only in there a three-trident tattoo inked on his forehead, but in 2000 he presented a full-blown art exhibition, *The Sign of the Crosses Hood Movie: The Path*. The theme persists in *Tooth Hangers* through a recurring song that refers to these little devils: "That's an old folk song that I, the character, bastardized," he says with a wicked grin. "I heard an early recording of a woman who was singing from the bottom of a well. She sounded like she was, like, 100 years old and part of her lyrics was missing. Needless to say, it has always stuck with me."

Although he's just finished a script and "might make something next year," Korine is more content "watching television, mowing the yard and playing baseball" these days. "Since the baby was born, I've watched a lot of *Alphabet*," he says. "I just put [the film] on and at there and watch marshmallow movies. I like that."

The infant trouble who once said he'd "die for cinema" has settled into the sort of suburban life he so violently rebelled against. "I think there must have been something wrong with me when I said that," he laughs. "I don't even know what that means. I think some impressionist said that."

From one impressionist to the next, it's that desire to create and stimulate that drives Korine. He explains, "I make things because I want to make things. Whether it's a movie or a one-line sentence or a song that you sing to yourself in the shower, you just do it because it's something you want to do. All that stuff about death and money, that's bullshit. There's just something wonderful in the act of creating."

Check out the full transcript online in the week of release.



TRASH HUMPERS

BY
STEPHEN VAUGHAN

Harmony Korine is back, and not just in the physical sense. As a direct reaction to the dirty, money and bullshit that came with *Music Factory*, his last, more commercial offering (indiscreetly speaking), the 35-year-old auteur has gone back to his roots and made a 78-minute "home movie" — originally called *Trash Humpers* — that, he suggests, "could have been found in a ditch somewhere."

The film, shot on a hand-held VCR camcorder, features a group of elderly delinquents (Korine and friends grossly aged with prosthetic make-up and silver-streaked hair) who billow in the director's hometown, Nashville, by drinking, fighting, riding bikes and literally kicking garbage. Scenes of the unique pranksters being highly suggestive with roller seats, broken tree branches and dumpsters are interspersed between even more surreal shots featuring murder, poetry and composed twins. It's just scenarios

provocation or does Korine, through his shocking imagery, unearth some truths about age, America and the very nature of film itself?

Korine does everything he can to persuade you it's the former, but there is a sense of corruption pervading the film's own esthetics that definitely points to the latter. That is not to say that the former enjoys terrible, who else to blame as just 22 as the screenwriter of *Larry Clark's Kids*, makes any kind of social critique or moral judgment, but in his pervaded cynicism, compassion can be discerned.

Then a counter-occurs at its best. For every warped, corporate-led blockbuster that comes hurtling out of Hollywood, something as gross, coarse and provocative as *Trash Humpers* must counteract, if just to remind us of the power of film.

The whole thing is hugely self-reflexive. Korine crosses the most shocking and grotesque scenarios imaginable with the techniques of

classical cinema — a stand-alone, episodic narrative nodding to his obsession with vaudeville and the cinema of his personal hero John Cassavetes — to make the viewer rethink movie, at all times, that they are watching a film. This is not about making you la, it's about pushing you away — like a punch in the gut.

"If you don't need this movie, you'll walk out," said renegade director Michael Haneke about his controversial film *Fanny Gershwitz*. The same can be said of *Trash Humpers*. Those who may make the choice to go on and in that decision spectators will find both empowerment and comfort.

And for all its cynicism it is one moment of beauty. At one point, Harrell, played by Korine himself, tap-dances in the lamp light of a dimmed car park. Later, Monica, played by Korine's wife Rachel, sings a folk song, which, while eerily dark,

has a haunting polyphony. Korine also, unconsciously, deconstructs the American landscape with an apocalyptic scene of 'Wall-Mart'-packaged doom. His backdrops are suburban wastelands and barren skies as dry and desolate as his subjects who, in an ode to nihilism, destroy everything. Harmony Korine may reject the idea of making a statement, but it's simply what he was born to do. **Shelley Jones**

Anticipation. Could a meta number of screenings hit was the main plot of the European International Documentary Festival in Florence. **D**

Engagement. A delicate and provocative test of endurance. **D**

In the background. A can of worms that explores the spectacle to ask questions and observe critically in reaction to the consensus and consumption offered by mainstream cinema. **D**



HEARTLESS

by Dave Karger

HEARTLESS
R
R
R

Philip Ridley might want to consider moving house. The East London-based filmmaker has written and directed this bizarre film inspired by the streets of his hometown. But if this is what it's done to him, he could use a spell in the country.

Heartless stars Jan Szurgalski (looking more and more like a young Robert De Niro) as James, a photographer with a vivid birthmark on his face. One one night snapping shots at a derelict house, James catches sight of something strange. Investigating further, he blunders into the middle of a disturbing ritual, perpetrated by what appears to be a coven of demons. As gang signs proliferate on the streets, and random acts

of violence strike ever closer to home, James steps over the threshold of the real into the world of Papa R, where he is offered a tempting deal by the devil.

Because James has fallen for Tina (Catherine Nadeau), a model of mysterious origins who shows up one day in his older brother's studio. Meanwhile his cousin, Lee (Lilike Tomoda), owes money to the wrong people, adding another layer of intrigue to this unholy mess.

Compared to the glut of icon-themed sleaser movies that have become the horror genre's stock-in-trade, *Heartless* has some bold ideas. There's a woozy sense of dislocation as the line between fantasy and reality is blurred by James's encroaching madness. There are

moments of striking violence, while the silky black streets and crumbling tenements of East London provide a suitably macabre and threatening backdrop.

But the film suffers from over-complexity, leading to a helter-skelter conclusion in which plot twists and character secrets are hurled at the audience with scant regard for narrative cohesion. Moreover, the question of exactly how much of this is happening inside James's head is never satisfactorily answered. The film wants to play games with perspective and subtext, but only ends up veering from the predictable to the implausible.

As much as it's refreshing to see some ambition and originality

in the genre, with Ridley taking his cues from the likes of Alan Moore rather than George Romero, *Heartless* lacks the narrative clarity, and therefore the dramatic intensity to succeed. Szurgalski gives it his all in a messy, breathless, disoriented performance, but commitments alone isn't enough to lift this film all that far above the pack. **Matt Boesche**

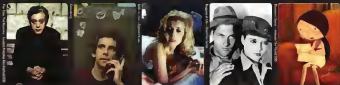
Antidotes: Another horror film. Just what the world needs. **D**

Enigma: A handful of decent ideas and a bloodily macabre atmosphere, one I enough to rescue an awful film. **C**

In Retrospect: Impressively weird, but it's hardly a beauty. **C**

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THE BAD LIEUTENANT: PORT OF CALL NEW ORLEANS

WE DARE PROVE THAT
HIS BARK'S STILL DANCING

Pinch some sample dialogue from Nicolas Cage's latest big-screen bust-up? How about "Sweet turn again... His soul's still dancing." Or "You're the last person in the world you want me to be." Then there's our personal favorite: "You're the fucking reason this country is going down the drain!" That last screamer is the craggy face of a decrepit old deer whose ar supply he's spat out loud, and whom he's belting with gunshot brutality.

Is this really the same chap who just last year lent his brains to charismatic licker cop like *Arro Roy and G-Five*? All we can assure is that there was something in the water around the time that the script for *Bad Lieutenant* and soon come book copier *Kick-Ass* slipped down on his doorman.

In *Bad Lieutenant* we discover a Cage clearly tapping a new, electrifying energy. Gone is the man who gave faces in check like *The White Man* and *Ghost Rider*; there is a tougher, changed, wilfully defiant actor cherry-picking risky roles like a mad man dancing on gunpowder with a match in his hand.

And they don't come much ruder than *Bad Lieutenant*, a riff on Abel Ferrara's 1992 crime thriller of the same name. Blagging into the role of Terrence McDonough, Cage plays a cop mired in the mire of drug fix, six months later we encounter him again, now a hunched, hallucinating mess moaning, cowering at crime scenes and sickily fingering any substance (MP, crack, heroin) his wandering, glazed eyes spy. Yip, he's nice with veins.

Though mired by renowned boundary-breaking director Werner Herzog, this is entirely Cage's show.

Co-opp Val Kilmer (early, pre-*Jack*), while live more or less *Martin* looks fresh, but does very little besides. Only some on-again support from rapist-quem *Jennifer Coolidge* refreshes the glass of Cage's glowing turn.

Alright, so Cage's crippled *Quentin* is good. What about the rest of the film? Truthfully, it's a mixed bag. *Scatterbrain* in tone (though perhaps that's the point, it's a dodgy serious one moment then hysterically howls the next). Herzog calls the savaged, post-*Kurosawa* setting for all as worth seeking the streets in a moody blue, neo-noir black, while infusing *William Shakespeare* by the numbers, cut-and-mouse drug-busting script with the flourishes of his own economic ego.

The result is a picture precariously poised on the cliff-edge of absurdity (fingering three-ages of vicious attacks from neo-hyper, McDonough's extreme actions seem to exist in a space all their own). But it's Cage's plucky, porous performance, awash in paired with Herzog's sublime landscapes, that anchor proceedings in a quasi-wildly entertaining hyper-reality. In short? Cage does bad so good. Here's hoping he keeps the crazy coming. **Josh Wessing**

Anticipation: What's the *Kick-Ass* like like a harder, more on-edge film? Can Herzog deliver? **B**

Enjoyment: No goes crazy with a chaotic routine that is equal parts harrowing and hilarious. It's a real thing though. **B**

Insight: The script is all over the place and Herzog indulges his ego in a full-on Cage is broken and healing. **B**

MICHAEL WINTERBOTTOM: KILLER INSTINCT INTERVIEW BY MATT BOCHENSKI

SELECT FILMOGRAPHY MICHAEL WINTERBOTTOM

The Glass Menace (2001)
Beavis (2001)
A Mighty Heart (2007)
The Road to Guantanamo (2006)
A Hardhead's Day (2005)
8 Steps (2004)
In the Field (2002)
24 Hour Party People (2002)
Welcome to Sarajevo (1997)
Julie & Julia

So debaucherous and academic is the work of Michael Winterbottom, an indie and electric, that he scarcely seems a British director at all. Neither mind is the grey grist of social realism, nor slavishly courting the keepers of Hollywood's coffers, Winterbottom has walked his own path, a secret trail some where between the margins and the middle where a cinema of ideas, politics, style and substance is allowed to come together on equal terms.

He has been the bold entrepreneur, making the hedonistic lives of 24 Hour Party People. He has been the fearless adapter, bringing the 'unfilmable' Brittain Shandy to the screen as *A Cook and a Thief*, and tackling Thomas Hardy's *Jude the Obscure*. And he has, of course, played the part of the provocateur, whether exposing the War's sordid secrets in *The Road to Guantanamo* or shattering the pop's sex scenes of *9 Songs*.

It is Winterbottom the controversialist who has returned with *The Killer Inside Me*. Based on the 1952 novel from pulp crime writer Jim Thompson, it is a fever-browed mindfuck—a serial killer thriller with blank eyes and a scorpion tail. It is narrated by Casey Affleck's Lou Ford, a small-town Deputy Sheriff whose crocodile smile masks the demons bubbling beneath. Quietly intense, *The Killer Inside Me* cages the viewer inside Ford's frustrating perspective, as the film flexes by which his dirty hinges hinge from fly to fly.

In the film's most notorious scene, Ford visits a prostitute, Joyce (played by Jessica Alba), ostensibly because they have plans to run away together. Once inside her shack on the outskirts of town, he holds her tenderly, tells her he loves her then beats her to death with his bare hands. Taking a leaf from Gaspar Noé's *Irreversible*, Winterbottom shocks the scene with a static camera and no cuts as Alba's famously alluring face disappears into a mass of broken flesh. Later, Kate Hudson's Amy will be choked in the stomach until her bladder bursts.

These scenes are disturbing. Shocking but not gratuitous, they're difficult to watch precisely because Winterbottom has so deviously normalized them in the context of Ford's breakdown. And yet, perhaps predictably, the violence in the film has provoked howls of outrage and accusations that Winterbottom himself is a monster. "How dare you?" was the first question the director faced from the public after the film's Sundance premiere.

Though Winterbottom professes to be "surprised" by that reaction, he's unapologetic about the effect of the film. "Should people be shocked by the violence? Yeah, that was the idea," he says, perched on the edge of a seat in the lobby of a London hotel. "When we were talking about how to construct the violence it is to try and show that it is brutal, it is ugly and it should be shocking. When I read the book the violence was shocking. However, when I finished the book I didn't feel, 'That was disgusting!' For me, it had a cathartic effect. You read about these terrible things being done and then afterwards you reflect about it and think about it.

"It's perfectly legitimate for anyone to say 'That film's too violent for me,'" he continues. "That's fine. There are lots of films that I don't want to see because I feel that it's crossed some border for me. But the reaction seems

to be that it's alright to show killings that are not shocking—if someone's being killed and it doesn't shock me that's fine, but don't show me someone being killed that shocks me because I think that's disgusting. And that somehow seems to be a moral point of view. To say that film is an immoral film seems to me to be perverse. If you want to take a moral stance on it—and I'm not saying you should necessarily—but if you do, then if a film is going to show a killing then surely it should show that it's wrong or that it's disgusting. So it's the reaction that's annoyed me."

The film is undoubtedly a challenge for audiences, with no obvious authorial voice to mollify or morally judge Lou Ford's actions. In that respect it is faithful to Thompson's novel, which never allowed the reader to step out of the story. Although the key for Winterbottom is that the story itself is less about the violence than "the wastefulness of that violence. Although it's about someone who's a killer and where the violence is quite brutal, there also seemed to me to be a lot of frustrated tenderness in the story," he explains.

After hooking up with two American producers who had been trying to get the film off the ground for almost a decade, Winterbottom moved quickly through the process of adaptation—within three weeks he had a shooting script and was ready to enter his film. "Obviously you have to cast Lou Ford first," he says. "Ford is telling you the story, he's in every scene and he totally dominates the film."

The director knew he wanted someone who had "the ability to convey something else going on in his head other than what he's actually doing on the surface," and approached Casey Affleck for the part even though the young actor had been poking his projects carefully since *The Assassination of Jesse James* had raised his profile. Affleck came on board, and from there other high-profile actors followed, attracted by email but seriously ready supporting roles.

For Affleck, the challenge was to allow himself to enter the warped headspace of a man like Ford, a process that didn't come easily. "On the days when there was violence, and not just the big killing scenes but the days when there was violence in the sexual side, it was tricky for Casey," admits Winterbottom. "It was easier on Jessica and Kate being the person having the violence done to them, whereas it was hard for Casey to get into a space where he could be Lou Ford and be the violent one."

On those days, Winterbottom's role was to give him space: the space they needed while keeping his own mind on the demands of a tricky technical shoot. Indeed, the mundanity of the film was at odds with the controversial content being shot. Perhaps that's why Winterbottom sometimes more fondly of the parts of the process before a single camera had rolled. "I think the most fun stage of any film is when you have an idea and it all still seems fresh," he says. "Before you've actually got to the point of trying to make it."

Check out the full transcript online in the week of release.



THE KILLER INSIDE ME

WINTERBOTTOM'S
LAST FILM WAS
THE KILLER INSIDE ME

Calling Michael Winterbottom a cinematic nomad would perhaps reach an unnecessary mystique to the director's career, if occasionally fascinating, once to date. Hopping between genres, styles, periods and locations like some kind of mad, prog rock alchemist, the more films he makes – and it's been an average of about one a year for the past decade – the tougher it becomes to detect any overall purpose, or thematic consistency in his work. Unlike, say, Kubrick or Resnais, he lacks a distinct authorial stamp, a byproduct or abiding interest which would help us not only understand his choice of material but allow us to view his films as the product of an artist.

His latest, *The Killer Inside Me*, perpetuates the problem. It's a sowing-and-blending pulp ace based on a novel by Jim Thompson that belongs to a warped breed of film that attempts to harness

psychopaths, from *American Psycho* to Robert Siodmak's *Henry, Portrait of a Serial Killer*. Cut-wise, this is only Winterbottom's most strangled movie to date; yet its leisurely pacing, austere subject matter and more-is-more attitude to screen violence means that it's the type of thing the studio wouldn't touch with a barge pole.

Casey Affleck delivers a committed turn as emotionally vacant small-town Deputy Sheriff Lou Ford, an apparently down-on-his-knees great who, it is implied, is prone to bouts of premeditated, brutally savage frenzies, furies and rages. The film chronicles the self-unraveling of his sadistic world via an attempt to take down a local property tycoon (Mel Beatty), with Ford using his meagre power of law enforcement to nibble at greier situations to satiate his homicidal whims.

Though Affleck's performance is cut from a similar lovable-rape-

with-violent-tendencies cloth as his turns in *Good Bye Lenin!* and *The Assassination of Jesse James*, Lou Ford is perhaps his most ominous and indefensible character to date. Apart from the few *Badlands* that show his vicious, childlike nature (including the bizarre scene of his spanking father), the reasons for his murderous drive are left unanswered. Like the title suggests, he's just a regular Joe who's got the devil in his soul. And that's it.

Though you'd be hard pressed to see the film as anything if not robust, there's a little evidence that Winterbottom has tried to give the source material his own personal spin. Beyond Lou Ford, the various side players feel like little more than single-note ciphers whose only purpose is to keep the plot moving forward. It leaves you to wonder what, as a more successful filmmaker (like Gore, perhaps) would have had

substituted these jury exchanges into memorable characters.

Ultimately, though, this is a film which will live or die in your memory based on your reaction to a series of almost surrealistic violence that occurs within the opening half an hour, and which has duly invoked comparisons to both *Gasper Noé's* *Irreversible* and Lars von Trier's *Antichrist*. Certainly the extremity of the material makes this out as another piece of test-your-nerve cinema, but whether its inclusion has any intellectual basis is highly questionable. **Alan Rick**

Anticipation: It's always nice to see what crazy director Winterbottom will take next. **B**

Background: A curly-haired Mac character drawn with scrawled SAM Saggare. Good spacing credit to his. **B**

In Bedroom: A lulling film, but just the technique, but the movies behind making it. **B**



AMERICAN: THE BILL HICKS STORY

Bill Hicks
Thomas and Harlock

Bill Hicks

Bill Hicks "blowtorch, outgroup, enforcer and brain specialist." In the words of Tom White. Or how about, "controversial," "prophetic," "legendary"... "overrated"? Sending on a definitive adjective for the late American comedian is a tricky business. Even his name, one of this documentary's primary contributions, is nominally lost for words: "Bill was interesting," she ventures. That'll do.

To Mary Hicks and the film's other interviewees - 10 of his relatives, closest friends and collaborators - Hicks was serene and non-weeping in equal measure. Flipping on homage rather than attempting to get under the man's skin, directors Paul Thomas and Matt Harlock follow Hicks' biography dutifully - from childhood anecdotes and early stand-up experiences (breaking out on school nights to perform at local amateur events) to his later drug problems, alcoholism and second wave of success, cut

short by his death from pancreatic cancer in 1994, aged 32.

Keeping talking heads to a minimum, the film recovers Hicks' story by assembling hundreds of photos - each individually manipulated to appear three-dimensional - a labour of love that took three years to complete. Novel but progressively irritating (not to mention disorienting - good luck trying to keep track of disembodied interviewees' voices) the display usually happily make way for the introduction of material from Hicks' early live shows.

Despite the footage's quality, dated. His halo, Hicks' surreal performance style remains as exciting as ever. Glad to agitate his crotch, spewing and spinning, his pitch will hit the microphone over glancing on his puffed forehead amid a cloud of cigarette smoke. He was every inch the twentieth-century muckster. You can right-on see the bile

rising and skidding along as he rants against US foreign policy, religious fundamentalism, media brainwashing and hillbillies. Little wonder his most dedicated fans don't hail from his native Texas, but the UK.

While Thomas and Harlock's parading compilation of archive footage and interviews with Hicks' nearest and dearest chart the development of his comic voice (there's scant discussion of the contemporary stand-up scene or pop culture to put him in context, and zero on tributes from, or reference to, his former fansite or girlfriends). There's also no room for criticism. For someone who stood so definitively against media spoon-feeding, and for a comic who cultured his role as society's muckraker (Chronology with dick jokes - as he would have it) a little out of step that the filmmakers never seek to question the questioner.

Made with flashy blinkers on, this was always destined to be a partial portrait. It's almost as though the men himself had a hand in it. In the months before his death, Hicks instructed his mother to help him file all his photos and showed her a documentary on his dad Jimmy Hendrix, 'in case someone comes and they want to make one about me.' Despite his professed aversion to it (he is advertising or marketing... Kill yourself? but), Hicks clearly leave a thing-or-two about brand management. **Sophie Ivan**

Anticipation: Hicks has a devoted cult following - but is this one for the masses as well as the convert? **1**

Delight: How a pleasant day in Hicksville - jokes come in standard **1**

In Retrospect: A little too in love with his subject, but a treat for fans **2**

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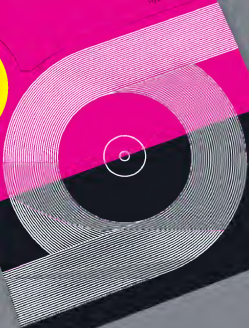
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VINCERE

Behind every man is a great woman, they say. Shot with poise and cut with panache, *Vincere* is both a muscular and a playful perversion of that old aphorism. A dramatization of recent Italian documenary Mussolini's Secret, the film depicts the political ascendance of Italian dictator Benito Mussolini through the eyes of Ida Daker, the woman rumored to have been his first wife and the mother of his first son.

Daker (played by Giovanna Mezzogiorno) first encounters Mussolini (Filippo Timi) at a socialist meeting in 1907. Placing a switch on the table, he challenges God to destroy him: "If he does not, it is proof he does not exist." His survival provokes a brawl among the religious masses, and a deep, lingering smile from Daker. They begin a short and intense

romance, and Daker abandons herself for him. A self-made woman, she sells her fortune to help him start a newspaper. "I'd say I have to marry you," he tells her. "Just tell me you love me, just once," she responds.

Mussolini, inevitably, vanishes before disowning her in his singular pursuit of power and glory. But immersed in the grief and anger this rejection brings, Daker refuses to fade into the background. As her intense and increasingly vociferous pleas for recognition begin to impinge on Mussolini's empire, she audaciously holds at her sister's home before being imprisoned in an asylum, her silence brutally enforced.

By weaving old newspaper facts get seamlessly into this narrative, veteran-director Marco Bellocchio recedes Mussolini's tale for theatergoers with Italy's apertic

heritage. But Daker's integrity is internal: an invincible heroine, an epopee that falls on deaf ears.

Vincere is built on three skulls — an original story, controlled direction and strong performances. Filippo Timi portrays Mussolini as utterly self-regarding but undeniably charismatic and seductive... But Giovanna Mezzogiorno's embodiment of Daker is the hook on which everything rests. As the meek-to-firestorm infatuation to devotion, mass chaos to defiance, her vulnerability and emotions never accede to intensity. She is the new heroine of European cinema.

This is a stylized reconstruction of history. Indeed, it's a shamelessly untruthful one. As such, it's tempting to read the film as an allegory for post-fascist Italy and Daker as a microcosm for society's subversion. To pursue this line far, though, would

deprecate the emotional core of the film. Daker was a real-life victim of fascism's horrific, grotesque parody. Bellocchio's resurrection of her says more than abstracts.

Vincere recalls Visconti's *Semio* mind with a dash of Michael Radford's *Nineties Eighty-Four* and Catherine Breillat's *Use Well, Mistress*. Nevertheless, it's as independent and courageous as an heroine. For Mussolini, a great woman was his crucifix and his undoing. **Tom Scavone**

Antidote: Enlarged drama. This could get boring. **C**

Delight: Self-made and authentic. *Vincere* establishes many modern examples of worthy (largely historical) cinema. **A**

In Bed: Beautifully directed. Powerful and tragic. Pure cinema. **D**

FOUR LIONS

Chris Morris on his new comedy film



In his mission statement for *Four Lions*, Chris Morris claims that 'terrorism is about ideology, but it's also about belief.'

The king of provocateurs drew the blueprint that guided the world's first, but since the critical success of *Submarine* like *The Day Today* he's preferred to keep a lower profile, pulling the strings behind the camera. There are no roles for Morris, as he proved with a *Bran* eye special on paedophilia that shocked the nation. But how far is too far? Are there things we shouldn't laugh at?

In *Four Lions*, Morris stars his cousin as a group of radicalised young Muslims in Sheffield planning 'coroner war' from a bedsit. Following three years of research



the filmmaker has come to the conclusion that many terrorist cells in the UK's approach the concept of planning an attack with the mentality of a stag weekend – and *Four Lions* offers humour to match.

The script strips about as if Morris and fellow writers Jessie Armstrong and Sam Bain (musicals of *Peep Show*) are trying to outdo one another with enjoyable yet brutal one-liners. The willingness to bend nature into gag points scoring is redoubt. And the sight of the miscreants hunk with explosives strapped to fancy dress costumes

of the Honey Monster, a Torteage Mustang (Nina Turtur) has all the subtlety of a sledgehammer.

There's no doubting the quality of the performances, but *Four Lions* is a comedy as the definition of Oscar – heading a motley crew of extremists (including Islamic convert Barry (Nigel Lindsay) and Faisal (Adel Elcheikh), who's convinced he can train cows to fly) bombing mosques – is further undermined by a running camp scene played for slapstick laughs. What we're left with is a *Spiral Tarp* for terrorism.

Morris has joked about his fear

of a lion, but the only backlash will come from those who feel that he's failed to hit the target with a punchy black comedy that doesn't live up to the promise of provocative satire: one that quickly gives way to satire. **Don't Bother Me**

Anticipation. Chris Morris' terrorism, if it lives up to past work, we could be looking at this year's *Big Bang*. **1**

Enjoyment. Rigger happy despite **1**

In Bedrock. Laughing loudly at our hero's latest bad taste in the mouth **2**

EYES WIDE OPEN

Ben Barnes



Screens as a Cousin (it's Gertie) *Widow* and nominated for the Best Screenplay at the London Film Festival in 2009. *Eyes Wide Open* is an engrossing and controversial Israeli drama that documents the burgeoning love affair between a married butcher and his young male assistant in an ultra-orthodox Jerusalem suburb.

Ben Barnes is mesmerising as Aaron, a butcher and ceremonial figure in the local synagogue whose life unravels after a stranger, Ben (Ben Dikler), turns up at his home. Compelled to take him in, Aaron – and the townfolk – gradually come to realise why Ben has to fight, ready to move on at a moment's notice when the weight of moral condemnation falls on his shoulders.

But Aaron is different. As long-buried feelings are awakened, Aaron reconciles his emotions to his



religious faith, seeking redemption in the path of temptation. But human frailty takes precedence over divine longings, and soon Aaron and Ben have succumbed to a passionate affair. Their feelings are both a challenge and an affront to the moral guardians of the community whose advice soon turns to warnings and threats.

Director Haim Taberman's studied, observational style and *Shameless* open, innocent gaze make the perfect foil to the raging passions and religious agony that lie beneath the surface of this moving film.

Perhaps in broader terms

the response to Aaron and Ben's homosexuality represents the prescriptive hostility of a nation that has long cultivated a rage mentality. But in truth this is a personal story, a delicate and sensual experience filled with humanity and tenderness. It is buoyed by the extraordinary commitment and honesty of its leads, especially Dikler who, as something of an Israeli Star, Bion, has everything to lose by courting that land of controversy.

'Before I was dead, now I am alive.' Aaron tells a friend. But moments tragically cast a shadow over every scene. In a heart-breaking

climate, Aaron will make a choice between the angels and demons of his nature, perhaps without truly recognising the differences between them. It's a wonderful and raw performance, filled with awe and wonder – but for what and from whom, you can no longer be sure. **Must Be Good**

Anticipation. Screen of it Carries with no previous hype. Something about gay Jews **2**

Enjoyment. Mature, sensitive and compelling filmmaking of the very highest order **1**

In Bedrock. A moving but dull. Absolutely top tier **1**

SAMUEL MAOZ: LIVING SOUL INTERVIEW BY NICK HASTED

FILMOGRAPHY
SAMUEL MAOZ

Maoz (2011)
The Refugee (2015)

Minutes into Samuel Maoz's autobiographical feature debut *Lebanon*, the lid of an Israeli tank sweeps shut. We see the 1982 invasion of Lebanon as it creeps down, physical and moral, until it's squeezed down to the thinning images glimpsed through a narrow window. Enemy rockets and civilian deaths shake them. When 19-year-old gunner Shmukli feels it's time, fellow soldiers are killed. When he does fire, it's worse.

Shmukli's experiences are those of Maoz, now a tall, intense 43-year-old. Lack of opportunity in the tiny local film industry, and the smell of burning flesh that accompanied remembering the war, delayed his debut. Watching Israel's 2006 invasion of Lebanon on TV finally forced him to write. But the painful incomprehension when a woman tells him about his "representation of the Arab" after a screening before war-movie devotees that *Lebanon* comes more from a visceral place than political rationalism. There are a thousand real war's intricacies.

Maoz's voice only wavers when he talks about film. "I saw *Apocalypse Now* after I came back. And I thought to myself, 'You catch the chaos, you catch the madness of the war.' But when I started to write, I used to see *Hushimim*, *Man Anetot*, or *Last Year at Marienbad*, or *Chin Maker*. There is no connection, but the feeling when I see them are like a metaphorology. 'You feel the passion again, you believe in your way again. Because for me, the interesting process is to test cinematic language, to test it, to restore it.'

When Maoz finally made *Lebanon*, the actors charged with bringing his trauma to life were equally committed. "I know I can explain to the actor about the claustrophobia, the heavy heat and the darkness, and I can use very beautiful words, and he can say he's understanding, but he won't. So each actor was left alone in a small, dark and very hot container for a few hours. Then we knocked on the container with rot paper. This is very close to a sudden attack. So after the actors go out, you don't need to speak. When you want to tell a story of the 'big heat,' you can't explain it through the heat. If you feel, then you will understand. And I didn't want the audience to think during the film. After the film, they can."

The director similarly shut down to survive his real war. "War isn't really you killing out of some 'ideal,' or because you are following orders, because a soldier is a normal person and a normal person cannot kill. Take a soldier, put him in a dangerous situation and he will start to kill, because our survival instinct is stronger than thinking. You can't tell yourself that now because of some ethical clause, I will stop thinking. I read that in all the wars, most of the soldiers that die, die in the first or second day they take part. Because you are thinking. For example, in *Lebanon* the order

was, 'Every movement in a balcony, shoot at the balcony.' So it could be someone with a rifle, and it could be a family. From time to time, someone with a rifle will send a girl to run in front of him. So if you are thinking twice, boom, you are dead."

But the war's moral aestheticism wore off. "Suddenly, you find that you are back home in the streets of Tel Aviv, as if he is trying to hurt you any more. Your survival instincts start to pack away. You don't want them to, because you feel safe. You feel something in the back of your head. Some kind of information that you don't want to deal with. This is the crash. When suddenly you understand that you killed people. I remember that I thought to myself, 'I wasn't me there. It was someone else.' But you learn to live with it in the end. Because there is no other choice."

His account makes comparisons with the Russian officers who routinely said they were "just following orders," but as his question is being framed, the director cuts in. "Listen, I will tell you—I have a responsibility. That's the problem. Okay, maybe I could say that Helé to a no-way-out situation. But I was there. There was the second that my finger pulled the trigger, and I feel responsible and I feel guilty, and I will feel guilty until the end of my life."

Lebanon and its international acceptance in winning Venice's Golden Lion and London's Subject Ray award—has made it fragilely possible for Maoz to live with the past that the film plays out with such force. "If I met you four, five years ago, we could talk, and I would never mention it. From the end of the war until Venice, I didn't have tears in my eyes. Just in Venice, after the official screening, people stood up and for 20 minutes I saw in front of me young people and old people looking at me, and suddenly after 20 years, I felt the tears again. And ever since, I'm like a baby. But I didn't do the film for that. It was something that I earned along the way, because I started talking about it."

Maoz fills with enthusiasm as he thinks of his future. "It's interesting—in your room you can move from side to side, you can lie on the floor, but as a tank, you don't have any choice than to go forward. But now after Venice the choices are big, and the opportunities. I learned that the tanks are a kind of blessing. Maybe that's one of the reasons that usually you see with known directors, after about three films, they get the money, and they stop thinking."

The man whose mind was constrained to be a soldier now has the opposite responsibility. "I keep reminding myself that I need to think, I need to think, I need to think..."

Check out the full transcript online in the week of release.



LEBANON

LEBANON
2006
115 min.

War
Drama

After Avi Feinman's superlative *Waltz With Bashir* comes another Israeli filmmaker in the class and coverage of the 1982 Lebanese war. And like that earlier acclaimed effort, Eran Kolosha's *Lebanon* has bold claims to innovation and authenticity. Unlike Feinman's masterpiece, however, they don't always ring true.

Based on the director's own experience as a tank gunner in the war, *Lebanon* unfolds from the disjunctive perspective of four common soldiers inside the steel guts of their machine. And here, Maad's camera will stay reflecting the literal and metaphorical blindness of these young men, and amplifying the terror of a scarcely seen war.

The tank itself is drawn with an almost obsessive physiology. Oil and sweat are as lifeblood, leaking suggestively from metal pipes and pooling in the dark bowels of the

floor, mixing with the sweat and tears of the crew. Self-consciously short on action, *Lebanon* does everything in its power to steep up the atmosphere. Almost every shot is in close-up—camera on shadows illuminated by eyes that appear shockingly white in the gloom.

But having established that bold premise—a war film that rejects the familiar humanism of the genre; a personal study of a political conflict—Maad proceeds to cheat his way around these restrictions. His camera may never leave the tank's dim interior, but by using the gun turret as an extension he allows himself sufficient wriggle room to introduce light outside the shell, and offer the film an exterior element that it doesn't really need.

Because here after all is the predictable parade of war movie clichés: the bomb-blackened ruins, the traumatized civilians, the ragged,

happy soldiers. Yes, there is an elegance to the way that Maad has traversed the terrain as a camera, insulating an object of destruction into one of creation, but the end result serves only to undermine his film's most haunting message.

There are the bones of a great stage play in *Lebanon*, where the temptation to think visually wouldn't compromise the claustrophobic narrative. But even then the film's screenplay would have to be radically improved. For all that these events are based on personal experience, Maad has compared the first act of exchanges to surrealistic bits.

War is hell as much young men are sure to die for a cause they neither believe in nor understand. Violence breeds violence, and horror escalates inevitably into atrocity. These are the lessons of *Lebanon*, just as they are the lessons

of every war film from the last 30 years. Lessons that were taught with infinitely more sobriety and resonance in *Waltz With Bashir*.

Maad has taken the most important morsel of his life and coupled it with a great idea only to make a film that, although sincerely felt, is both underwhelming and disingenuous. Though technically ingenious and daringly conceived, *Lebanon* has nothing new to add to the dialogue of war dramas. **Matt Richenthal**

Intelligence: A war film with a difference. Winner of the Golden Lion for Best Film at Venice in 2005. **B**

Insight: Cannot forget it stays on the list. Shows beyond the surface of the tank and still finds nothing new to say. **B**

In Retrospect: A strange mix of the fresh and the stale. **B**



GREENBERG

Ben Stiller
in *Greenberg*

by
David Karger

Roger Greenberg (Ben Stiller) has issues. He's pushing 40 but never really worked down. His freshman disease squandered on the folly of youth, Greenberg's life has unfolded through a succession of tentative baby steps towards discontent. As an out of work carpenter fresh from a stretch in a psychiatric hospital following a nervous breakdown, Greenberg spends his days scribbling snuff letters to corporate clients and generally grating the world to rights.

Returning to L.A. to house-hunt for his holidaying brother, Greenberg is keen to re-visit the men he scorned when he left the crop for New York 15 years earlier. Looking up old acquaintances, however, merely amplifies Greenberg's self loathing, which he misjudges with an unconsciously canine demeanor. That his maniculate attitude only is fooling anyone. The simple truth is that we know he had a self mapped out

In a bid to save off boredom, Greenberg decides to bunk in the freedom of his bachelorhood and from his cross-mitten crossbones on his brother's young assistant Florence (Criste Cornejo). Approachably cute with an unknowing, get next door charms Florence incites Greenberg's repressed advances, but his hand-gemmed temperament quickly restores her reserve tone. As Florence prudently puts it, "Most people hurt people."

And Greenberg hurts people. Whether it's Florence or defunct boss Ewald and former headcase Ivan (Phyllis Diller), he seems perpetually blind to the misery he deflects onto those closest to him. But the more he hurts the more Greenberg begins to realize that Florence might just be the substance he's not been looking for.

Although it's been a while since he's turned up in anything with this much dramatic merit,

Stiller is a safe choice in the lead. Assuredly excavating the chip from Chase Tinselman's forehead, Stiller's schizophrenic performance rests heavily on a script laced with witicism, very humor and even a few monetary cues for smiley faces. Ignoring his graying, misted hair and dabbles more into, that's pretty standard Stiller, but the balance between laughing with and at him has been well struck, at least.

If *The Squid and the Whale* and *Margot at the Wedding* were laureate in their respective portraits of a family in decay, then Greenberg represents something of a departure for Baumbach. Spraying his brand of character bledding into an intricate direction of one man's meandering path of self-dependence, Baumbach encourages his audience to embrace Greenberg, shortcomings and all. It's not an easy sell, but with a scoreless Greenberg as the grounding force in this unlikely but believable

match up, you can't help but want to him.

Clearly Baumbach is aware of the strength of the Stiller/Gervig dynamic and as such he refrains from indulging an otherwise sure-handed supporting cast. Jennifer Jason Leigh (aka Mrs Baumbach) and understudying Mark Duplass appear only briefly while a last minute Ryan Riano is underplayed as Greenberg's all-too-complaint voice of reason. Ultimately Greenberg will be judged on a script which in its substance of wacky idiosyncrasy for sharp, biting humor, may well see Baumbach win over the cynics. **A-Adam Woodward**

Antidote: Spicy wife corners or mulls of the road handling? **B**

Delight: For a film that gets deliberately down to it, much Greenberg is surprisingly affecting. **B**

In Retirement: Baumbach grows up and suggests he's getting better with age. **C**



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HOT TUB TIME MACHINE

TIME TRAVEL LARSES CAN'T FIND AN '80S MAGNETITE

The biggest joke in the flashback comedy *Hot Tub Time Machine* is an ongoing metaphor about the movie itself. The actual timeline involves the flick from the *summer of every* before, from every reference, every dick joke and every out-of-bounds plot. "But it's a good kind of foolish!"

Look at Craig Robinson's Ned, the caddy-bush househusband in a three-pack of fuzzy, something-everyman who are whisked back in time to an Aspen-like pleasure village in 1986 after one heady night in a magical hot tub. When the party drops and Ned realizes he and friends Adrian (John Cusack) and Lou (Rob Corddry) have made the same jump, his storm fits at the hot tub, then back up to camera and announcer disclaim to the paying audience, "It must be some kind of... hot tub time machine." It's a nice ice but its fourth wall delivery is also the reason for a movie whose

misplaced even in that of four thousand up line boys making wildly uneven one-liner scenes a late night keggers. Say what you will about *The Hangover*, but at least it had structure. As least it felt like an actual movie.

Whereas *Hot Tub Time Machine* is wholly built around Ned's incoherent line, as if head screenwriter Josh Hartselle had imagined that one single sentence in a moment of inspiration and decided to stick an entire narrative to it—with scenes, characters and gags all chaotically applied like so many bits of Blu-Tack on a handle.

For instance? Ned and co are given a new subplot called Jacob (Chad Drake) who is Adrian's nephew and who seems to exist solely to make jokes about the absence of a real and strong in

the '80s, and as a step to a younger audience demographic. And then Chevy Chase pops up because he's like an '80s and because, well, the movie doesn't really have a story—in Chevy goes in one by being the mystical hot tub companion who tells our heroes that they only have 24 hours before they go back to 2010 and that they have to replay this one night exactly as they experienced it in 1986 or face some dire consequences that the movie isn't really interested in exploring because it's clearly never going to happen. And then there's Crippin' Ghost, floating around the hinterland of nearly every scene as a sexy briliob because, um, he was in *Back to the Future*.

Which would have been fine if the movie really knew its apples and ribbles as '80s ethos. But Hartselle was only nine-years-old in 1986 and he felt for the era is currently not creative. Instead, the director-invented a *Shogun Vibe* T-shirt, a few dozen lip-synchs, and Ronald Reagan on TV.

Just occasionally there are moments that resonate. When Cusack, for instance, announces his flashback girlfriend that he's not going to make it big in the future there is a brief but powerful lesson of extra digress recognition—an awareness that the actor never quite fulfilled his '80s promise. And there, as soon as it comes, is a game, and it's back to blubbery gags again. Kevin Maher

Anticipation: New title: *Funny trade* ①

Delighted: For jokes, Samson jokes (Chad Drake) to Adrian (Chad Drake) for his middle-aged men ②

In a nutshell: This year's *The Hangover* is a rip-off of ③

EDDIE MARSAN: EAST LONDON SON

INTERVIEW BY ADAM WOODWARD

SELECT FILMOGRAPHY EDDIE MARSAN

The Boatman's Boy (2002)

Darkish Blues (2001)

No and Then Motion (2000)

Happy Birthday (2000)

It's a Wonderful (2000)

The New World (2000)

Five Gates (2000)

21 Grams (2003)

Days of Wine and Roses (2005)

Inspector No. 1 (2005)

"I'm not a violent person," says Eddie Marsan. "I'm not tough at all, but I come from a part of London that's very violent; that has a history of violent people."

Marsan may have embodied an array of roles since making the transition from television to film a decade ago, but his ability to stir and move audiences has seen him settle into the realms of silver-screen villain. Whose his focus, snapping performances evince a daunting onscreen persona, however, off it Marsan's an altogether more laid-back fellow: a warmly spoken family man with an instant if unassuming charisma.

Born to a working-class family in East London in the late 1960s, Marsan openly admits channeling his hardened background into the menacing onscreen demeanor that has shot him to prominence in recent years. "Because of where I come from, I've used to seeing people express themselves in a very outcasted manner through violence and rage," he says. "But the upside of that is I've also seen the sadness and the isolation that these people feel. It's a part of me that knows rage and violence, but also knows the sadness it brings. It's both sides of the same coin, really."

It's this double-headed dichotomy that personifies Marsan's latest role, as twelfth, petty conman Vic in J. Blakeson's feature debut, *The Disappearance of Alice Creed*. Vic, like Scott in Mike Leigh's *Happy-Go-Lucky*, is a bully. But as Marsan affirms, he's also misunderstood. "You think Vic is a horrible, incredibly violent man, but by the end of the film you realize what his true motives are. You sympathize with him and start to relate to him on a much more personal level." He continues, "It's the same as *Happy-Go-Lucky*—at the beginning, you think Scott's a cunt, but by the end of the film you realize he's just lonely, and he hasn't really done to learn with how to handle that."

While Vic may be a bawdier character, Marsan's no one-track cowboy in 10 years in the industry. Marsan's versatility has seen him inhabit numerous guises in a variety of home-grown features and Hollywood blockbusters, returning to television to star in *Life on a Stick* and last year's *Red Riding* trilogy. While the aforementioned are more niche pieces placed Marsan amongst the cream of British acting, however, *Alice Creed* is considerably more extensive, with Marsan acting as a foil to two emerging young talents.

Working alongside Martin Compston and Gemma Arterton, Marsan relished his position as the senior cast member, although at times he admits it was difficult not to feel his age. "I felt bloody old. Especially when we had to do scenes where I look my 40 off and I saw Martin had been down the

gyns, the barbed. We had great fun though," he adds. "It was a short shoot, but it was quite intense so it was important that we all got on. Martin and Gemma are two great young actors, and I'm aged with three kids. So when we finished shooting for the weekend they'd be taking about what they were up to or what club they were going to and I'd be planning my trip home to go and spend time with my kids."

In changing family life, Marsan has always appreciated the support of those nearest to him, which he says has long been a driving force in his pursuit of acting. "I learnt how to act in front of two or three people, and one of them was my mum. I was always very grateful for that. In many ways, it made me who I am."

His success decades may well be a reflection of his character, but even more so, it's a sign of his humble upbringing. It's not just Marsan's roots that keep him grounded, however. From East End to West Coast and back, he's seen and experienced enough to allow him to take stock of what really matters. Marsan's got the film world sussed and he makes no bones about telling it like it is. "There are a lot of people in this industry with more ambition than ability, and more ambition than experience," he says. "This industry is full of a lot of people, 'cause I've met 'em, that talk a lot of bullshit and when they get to make a film, and get the money to make a film, it's a load of old bollocks. They've got the cash but they don't know what the fuck to do with it. They don't learn the trade. They get a bit of money, join Soto House and tell everyone they're a filmmaker. It's bollocks."

With such a fairlight perspective, it's no surprise that Marsan is planning on returning to theatre before appearing in William Marsan's London. *Boiled* later in the year. He seems firmly set on following in the footsteps of the film of Jim Broadbent and Timothy Spall, two thespians Marsan openly looks up to. "That's the dream to do what they do, to be where they are in their careers."

From experience, however, Marsan knows success doesn't come easy. "I acted above every pub in London before I started really getting anywhere," he recounts. "So I know I've got some way to go yet." While Marsan's future looks set to flourish, for now he's far more concerned with taking things as they come rather than wasting time contemplating it. "It sure as f--- come one way or another. It always does."

Check out the full transcript online in the week of release.



THE DISAPPEARANCE OF ALICE CREED

ALICE CREED
ALICE CREED

ALICE CREED
ALICE CREED

Launching head-on into an atmospheric opening sequence, *The Disappearance of Alice Creed* sets up its premise with sobering realism, as two unattracted couples slowly and systematically prepare for the most calculated of crimes. In an abandoned, nondescript bedchamber, windows are boarded, walls are foam-padded and doors are bolted shut. Every last inch of the isolated apartment is stripped, soundproofed and doubly secured, every possible exit point sealed off.

Out in a suburban neighborhood street where our muted double act has set in an unmarked van, and compose themselves, biding their silence to run through their meticulous plan one last time. In a fit of efficient frenzy the pair gag and gag a young woman and hurry her back to her makeshift prison, where she is strapped, re-tied in a crushed-purple inchlock and cuffed to each corner of a bed.

Face-to-face with her kidnappers for the first time, Alice Creed (*Corrina, Corrina*) tentatively squawks out the first question anyone would ask in her situation. But Alice knows why she's here: she's a daddy's girl from a rich family and thus a prime target for ransom.

Not long from incarceration, our now named ex-con accomplice Vic (Eddie Marsan) and determined to follow their scheme through to the bitter end. But as the hours eat away and the arranged meet-up approaches, their macho ploys to strategy and precision. With Alice growing increasingly uncooperative and refusing to play the part of prisoner hostage, a bottle of pills and who knows what tips the film on its side.

Like any kidnapping caper, it's a race long before a hitch or two throws the duo's thorough planning, but rather than play out

in a predictably limited fashion, *Alice Creed* evolves into a delicately poised character study. Developing into a famous dog-eat-dog after, you'll be left guessing as to who will prevail right up until the film's volatile final act.

J. Blakson has conceived a refreshingly original crime drama, although the director is certainly keen to rub in a debt of gratitude to the more prominent forebears of the genre. Like *Reservoir Dogs*, this low-budget British thriller is all about the upshot. The audience's only vantage point of the abduction is quite literally a backseat one, as Alice is bundled into the back of a hired limousine.

Similarly, the film's single location setting becomes a catalytic force of its own. As the claustrophobic character dynamic becomes progressively more focused, the explicit confinement of *Requiem* and *The Shining* is knowingly nodded to.

Although relatively economical, Blakson's feature debut still has a lot of time to fill between sheltering and restoring its own equilibrium. But a couple of shrewdly deployed narrative spins and three easily earned performances ensure that this is no straightforward bloodied cocktail.

Alice Creed is by no means a genre changer, but however familiar its premise, and despite the inevitability of its conclusion, Blakson's intelligent screenplay and a tautly control three-way trinity for scintillatingly tense viewing. **Adam Woodward**

Anticipation: Good. The sub-par sub-genre trope. **C**

Biggest: It's well done from a promising young director. **B**

In-Itself: More budget British reviewing at its best. **B**



LETTERS TO JULIET

Juliet's relationship with Romeo is the heart of the story. But what if she's not who you think she is?

By
JAMES WATSON

The similarities with *Mamma Mia!* are obvious. Amanda Seyfried? Check. Medley tunes? Check. A mad-as-a-hatter adherence to chack-flick conventions? That too. Yet there's one big difference: Where *Mamma Mia!* pattered its cranks with the song-a-long effervescence of Abba, *Letters To Juliet* has no such fun. Meryl and co. thought they were in peril. This lot think they're in Shakespeare.

Seyfried stars as Sophie, a New Yorker holidaying in Verona with her chef fiance (Gael García Bernal). There she discovers Juliet's Square—a backstage courtyard supposedly the setting for Romeo and Juliet's balcony scene. It's also where tourists

regularly leave letters for the tragic heroines, asking for advice.

When future hubby solitarily heads off on a culinary tour, Sophie investigates the square further, finding an ancient letter hidden behind a brick. The note is from an English girl, Claire (Natasia Redgrave), once abandoned by a local lad who went back home instead of marrying her. Determined to reunite the now pension-age lovers, Sophie comes back, leading to Claire's belated return to Verona, along with sweetie grandson Charlie (Christopher Egan). The search begins for long lost bona, Lorenzo.

Letters To Juliet is unapologetically terrible. Where it could have been romantic, it's clunky. Where it

could have been funny, it's more like an ad for Dolmio. Leaving no manuscript unturned, from needy Italian infatuations to feisty Catholic grandmothers caving about homestead racism, the film treats its audience like idiots. While the Mesyle joni is pretty—Sophie in her slip dresses ambles around the Veronese countryside in a Fiat 500 caberlot—the script's endless exposition is pug ugly.

Being optimistic, maybe this has a life as a cult slice of unknowingly camp trash. Its release date also plays into the hands of bored World Cup widows. It's a missed opportunity for fun, though.

Seyfried acts like she's spaced out on lincolnella in a role even Kate Hudson would have turned

down. As crumbly Claire, Natasia Redgrave is like a mad old lost wandering around the supermarket aisle in her nightgown. Both parts, however, compared to former *Home and Away* star Christopher Egan. Playing solitarily Charlie, his accent comprehensible only to walls down a blackboard, his predictable and exasperating transformation from prig to charmer makes Pierce Brosnan's playing of "SCOT" suddenly seem like poetry. **James King**

Adaptation. *Mamma Mia!* meets *The British Light* **D**

Delight. It doesn't **D**

In Retrospect. Run-on fans are listed under taken **D**

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THE TIME THAT REMAINS

THE TIME THAT REMAINS
Elias Suleiman
Ray Anderson

If Elias Suleiman wasn't a filmmaker, you can't help but think that if he'd make one hell of a political cartoonist. If you squint, you can almost make out the invisible speech bubbles filled with dryly humorous barbs within his minutely choreographed, fixed-frame compositions.

Cut from the same cloth as his 2012 nomination on the possibility of love between geographic borders, *Divine Intervention*, this latest work again takes very umbrage with the absurd cultural divisions within his birthplace of Nazareth, although this time he's shifted his focus from the present to look back to the past.

During this new film on discus, his father kept during his dying days. Suleiman tells the story of the last 50 years of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the eyes of his

own family and the surrounding community.

Reprising a comfortable narrative sweep in favor of presenting fragments of action across the more six decades the film opens on the story of his father, Fadi (Saleh Bate) a rebellious gun-maker who nobly stands up against the invading Israeli armies as they gag, bind and torture him for his alleged defiance. As Suleiman explores how the various Israeli folk react to the incursions, this first segment lays down the context of brutal oppression that paves the way for the remainder of the film.

Plunging forward to a "yes of teenage soft furnishings, the Suleimans now have a son, Elia who is finding it tough to suppress his anxieties about American

imperialism, much to the comic chagrin of his headmaster. Fadi, too, is forced to deal with his neighbor's repeated threats to set himself on fire, as well as constant harassment by the Israeli army over his "innocent" night fishing trips.

The 80s offer more of the same, with Elia now a young firebrand and his puffed father grudgingly accepting of his lot. This segment also contains the film's best line, spoken by two elderly men in a room, both while conversing with Fadi. "This is my son. He's fucked every mother in the village. Fucked his mother."

The director himself crops up in the final (and best) chapter, which is set in the present, where he is charged with caring for his dying mother while watching in silent amazement as the politically fragile

landscape implodes before him.

Like Kaurismäki and Roy Anderson, Suleiman's approach to humour is something of an acquired taste. With *The Time That Remains*, even those who have acquired it will find some gaps as he hints more forcefully than others. While there's no denying that this is a passionate and intelligent piece of filmmaking, one wonders how many more errors this idiosyncratic neoplace can survive Suleiman's cinematic macho. **Adam Blyth**

Anticipation: It's been eight years since his comedy hit, *Divine Intervention* **1**

Endgame: A hit and miss affair but an admirably eclectic one **2**

In His Tracks: Also it's rather as focused on capturing as his previous movies **3**

BLACK DEATH

BLACK
DEATH

BLACK
DEATH

"There's nothing beautiful or uplifting in screaming people to God," says John Lynch's Wolfram at the conclusion of *Black Death*. And the same is true of the trail spattered, blood splattered, corpse-strewn film itself.

That is the fourteenth century painted in shades of death and suffering. The plague is sweeping through Europe, sending the Church into a spasm of religious violence. Hearing of a village that has remained unaffected, and promising the work of the devil a taste of medieval hunter men are dispatched to investigate. Led by Sean Bean's zealous Ulric, but guided by a novice monk, Osmund,

played by Eddi Riedmann.

Both men have ulterior motives - Ulric to do God's bloody work. Osmund to keep an assignation with a young woman - and it is their clash - between old and young, innocence and corruption, prey and hunter - that initially is at the heart of the drama.

After our outcast crusaders have murdered their way to the village, however, they find compassion in the form of Lengua (Carice van Houten), a lady in devil's red under whose beguiling influence the film takes a welcome

left turn into the truly unexpected.

It's far to say that the shadow of *Monty Python* hangs uncharitably over *Black Death*, recalling *The Holy Grail* in scenes of peasants wallowing in mud or carts of the dead being wheeled through the streets. But to director Christopher Smith a credit, these echoes are drowned out by the handiwork urgency of his own film, which ultimately has more in common with the evocative pagan horror of *The Wicker Man*.

Despite occasionally succumbing to the potteriness it is claimed

these villages are beyond death's icy grasp?"). *Black Death*'s script is a tough-minded examination of the politics of faith that maintains an admirable ambiguity towards a climax in which "God is revealed" through fury and vengeance. **Mark Buchanan**

Anticipation: Better director than *Dark Ages* director. Sounds like quite a ride. **1**

Engagement: Holy men, demons and disfigurements. Fan-freakin'-tastic! **2**

In retrospect: Do it and die a saintmaker. **3**



PIMP

PIMP

PIMP

Sitting somewhere between *Kiss Kiss Bang Bang* and an episode of *The Bill*, Robert Crampton's first stab at feature directing puts a documentary crew on the trail of underworld enforcer Woody (Cavanagh himself) as he plays HR manager to a gaggle of Soho working girls.

But Woody isn't your average pimp: he writes poetry and hangs modern art on the walls of his apartment. He has depth. Only as the Sling of people inflicting and actual slavery. Woody can't help letting his feelings get in the way. When a beautiful Chinese immigrant with a kidnapped son comes under his watch, things rapidly slide out of control.

Cavanagh uses the documentary crew as a device to get inside an otherwise closed world.

Except, when the doc foreman isn't working, it's quietly pecked away or replaced with footage shot on far fetched masculine citizens which nevertheless pass and frame shots like a top-notch second unit DTP. Which begs the question, why bother with the whole documentary MacGuffin in the first place?

Other inconsistencies make themselves felt. *The Soho setting* is one that would only be familiar to someone who last visited London for Charles and Di's wedding. But this is not only 2010, as evidenced by surveillance technology and the rise of Chinese gangsters

Their attempt to take over the Soho film trade is wheeled on whenever the plot lags frequently, and occasionally provides something close to excitement. There's even a suggestion that the director may be referencing *The Lung Good Friday* in his portrayal of the criminal element of a rising global power profitably cycling London's black economy. But if so, it's a nod that's completely undermined in the final reel.

Throw in a barely believable snuff-scene powered by "Wo-style" with designer Billy Boyd, add a lazing Danny Dyer occupying it

up, and rope in former boxer Terry Marsh for a cameo, and you have a film that's both breathtakingly cross and unintentionally funny without ever being engaging or entertaining. Although, oddly, Cavanagh is actually rather good. **Paul Fierclough**

Anticipation: Terry Dyer is wearing a three-piece suit in the prologue. Is this the market he intends his target? **1**

Engagement: Scott is a packed cinema to experience a violation with collective narcissism. **2**

In retrospect: Who do we have to sleep with to stop their films getting made? **3**





WILD GRASS

1989
France

Directed by
Alain Resnais

Now in his late eighties, treasured Nouvelle Vague director Alain Resnais has compared *Wild Grass*—a comedic, romantic love story of sorts between two sufferers of a mild life crisis. The film acted as the perfide to a lifetime achievement award at last year's Cannes Film Festival. It is fairly close to what you'd expect from a signature of Resnais's enlangued cinematic movement—a languorous caprice of a film, peeped at its idiosyncrasies and with a vein of cerebral drama. With unassuming narration, the humour here is slightly mean-spirited with a subversive edge: winking from intoxicating and seductive to expensively capricious. But *Wild Grass* is a casual fling of cinema's but finely tuned creative muscles that playfully demands reverence. **Ten Seymour** **D D D**



ROOM AND A HALF

1982
USSR

Directed by
Andrey Khachaturov

Award-winning animator Andrey Khachaturov's *Room And A Half* imagines the return of Nobel laureate Joseph Brodsky to the motherland he fled in 1932. Handling the poet's trip back to the USSR of the '50s and early '60s with biographical details from his colourful life. Using an evocative mix of live action, animation and documentary material, Khachaturov depicts the older Brodsky (Gregory Deyatkovsky) as he recalls his idyllic childhood in a small Leningrad apartment. Later, the director traces the fledgling writer's exposure to a wider world of language until the repressive nature of the Soviet Union begins to crystallize thoughts of exile. *Room And A Half* offers an intimate and intimate portrait both of a great poet and of the post-Second World War Soviet world. **Jason Wood** **D D D**



REVANCHE

2005
France

Directed by
Götz Spielmann

Revenge is a dish best served slowly and meticulously in Götz Spielmann's study of grief and ambition. The film focuses on a scarred prostitute and her part-stricken lover, Alex (Johannes Kracht), who attempts to circumvent some sort of payback on the policeman responsible for his partner's death. Spielmann avoids clichés, turning in something far more thoughtful and far less conventional. Adopting a precise and measured approach to its age-old themes, *Revenge* makes for a beguiling, if slightly overlong, journey to the dark side. Aided by a terrific performance from Kracht and an exceptional ensemble cast, *Revenge* is a beautifully crafted psychological thriller that should firmly place Götz Spielmann on the world cinema map. **Lee Griffiths** **D D D**



THE GIRL ON THE TRAIN

2004
France

Directed by
Anne-Marie Trepoigt

In 2004, a young French woman became an overnight media sensation when she claimed to have been snatched by six men in a malicious anti-Semitic attack on a train outside Paris. But her story as a nation's sweetheart was ultimately short-lived, as her torn clothes, scuffed hair and swollen, tagged body were revealed to be self-inflicted. With the effervescent Emile Desautels as the enigmatic fillet, *The Girl on the Train* works to de-sensationalise the true story of a lie by turning a public shaming into an intimate personal story. Techné's spellbinding storytelling glazes over the greater issue of France's resurgence anti-Semitism, but never deplorably so. It's an ill-fated journey for our protagonist, perhaps, but that doesn't make it any less upbeat. **Adore Woodhead** **D D D**



A BOY CALLED DAD

2005
100 mins

PG
Ages 7+

A Boy Called Dad is the debut film from Brian Percival. As suggested by the title - a fellow Robbie (Rylee Ward), a 14-year-old unwitting father. This is 'Broken Britain' in which all the elements of conventional social realism are present - and yet it isn't just Louchie law. Shot adroitly and containing Leone-esque close-ups with long tracking shots of the various urban and rural locations, the film possesses the ambiguity of emotional ties over obligatory melodrama. But, regrettably, the narrative forms in all too familiar patterns (after *Pah Park* 'When now seems the place to escape to if you're the downtrodden teenager in a kitchen sink drama'). No matter committed performances and confident direction provide further proof that our national cinema is in rude health. **Tom Seymour** **000**



THE MILK OF SORROW

2005
100 mins

PG
Ages 7+

Feasta (Magaly Solier), a timid young Peruvian woman, presides over the death of her mother in the dusty suburbs of Lima, Peru. Believing herself cursed with the elder woman's 'Frightened Ti' - her mother was raped by Shining Path guerrillas and passed her fear and pain on to her daughter through her breast milk - Feasta has remained closed off from the world. Anxious in company and terrified of being alone, she unconsciously found to resist the films on its own terms. With its blantly splendid acting, mournful pacing and lovely, bruised characters, there might seem little to mark the Spanish Peruvians effort out from the art-house pack, but it evolves into a striking work of shimmering simplicity that details a grieving society slowly coming to terms with its past. **Adam Lee Davies** **000**



FURRY VENGEANCE

2005
90 mins

PG
Ages 7+

Furry Vengeance is an anarchic comedy with an eco-consciousness. Brendan Fraser stars as an overblown property developer on the task of turning a nature reserve into prime real estate. A band of woodland critters instigate a campaign of terror and humiliation against him with increasingly sadistic relish. Of course he has an epiphany after all the torture and mayhem and sets out to right his wrongs. There's plenty of scatological humour and parables from a game cat. Sophisticated it isn't, but there are some decent visual gags and Fraser is good fun as the man at war with nature. Director Roger Kumble - used to helming much more vulgar material, brings his puerile sense of humour to proceedings. Young ones will enjoy the animal shenanigans. **Martyn Connors** **000**



ONE NIGHT IN TURIN

2005
100 mins

PG
Ages 7+

James Ennis's tale of the England football team's near-glory at Italia '90 makes much of context - the fluctuating fortunes of the national side providing a ironic to a weak economy and unrest and an unpopular government. But Ennis never quite explores the brutal mercenary and tribal appeal of the beautiful game. It's didn't to obviously heroic Gera and Bobby Robinson, if it was more nuanced in its characterisations of the under press and Whistler, if it was less beholden to the hyperbole that football means and less willing to appease the relentless cliché, then *One Night in Turin* could have been a real tribute. Unfortunately a he like Steve McClaren - this film may have been doomed from the get-go. **Tom Seymour** **000**

CHAPTER FIVE
IN WHICH WE
DISCUSS
THE MEDIUM
OF FILM
IN ITS MANY
MESMERISING
FORMS

THE

BACK SECTION

29



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY JED WILSON



WITHNAIL

PHOTOGRAPHER
MURRAY CLOSE
REVISITS HIS
WORK ON THE
SET OF BRUCE
ROBINSON'S
SEMINAL
1987 COMEDY
WITHNAIL & I.



Murray Close has stalked the sets of some of the world's most famous movies. He's worked with the likes of Stanley Kubrick, Al Pacino, Steven Spielberg, Harrison Ford, Sam Peckinpah, Quentin Tarantino, David O. Russell and Alfonso Cuarón. But you won't catch him at cameras.

Because Murray Close is the man behind the camera. In fact as the on-set photographer, he's the man behind the man behind the camera, hanging back beyond the film crew, capturing the creative process for posterity.

In 1987 he picked up in Guatemala with a heavy load of filmstock to shoot a small-scale comedy about two out-of-work actors. *Withnail & I* turned out to be a British classic, and it's partly because of Close's pictures that the film is as fondly and vividly remembered.

As he prepares to open a special exhibition of desert and island film-stories photography at Power Chelsea, we caught up with Close to re-live the past.

LWList What are your overriding memories of the time you spent on the set of *Withnail & I*?

Close What was immediately apparent was how it really did seem to be a bunch of renegade filmmakers on a island and a big cottage that was just a pile of stone in the Lake District. My upbringing in all of this was with Stanley Kubrick and *The Shining* so I was used to these

huge, slow-moving behemoths. Suddenly I was with all these crazy people running around.

LWList Does working on such a small film change your role?

Close It given you little input – because there's fewer people there, there's less layers of bullshit that you've got to go through. If you've got ideas for some photographs you can go straight to the actors and ask and they'll go, 'Oh sure, let's do it', rather than going through publicists. The experience was very refreshing.

LWList Do you think there's any correlation between getting great photographs and having a sense of the film being any good?

Close Unfortunately not. I mean, I've worked on films that have been incredibly creative and hugely experienced with great visual images and it's very frustrating for me when the film goes straight to hell and I've got a book full of beautiful photographs but I can't tell anyone because they laugh. It all starts with the script – no one knew that *Withnail & I* was going to be comic, but what we did know was that the script was exceptional.

LWList What are you fanatically trying to achieve when you're on set?

Close I'm trying to portray the tone or the emotion of the script, and I'm trying to put the director's

vision in a photograph. I don't do that then I've failed. Now in addition to that I am looking to create kinetic behind-the-scenes images of the film being made because you don't know you're working on *Withnail & I* until 20 years later and then it's too late. Every film, you've got to go into it thinking, 'There could be the most famous photograph I ever take in 20 years time.'

LWList Is it easier to get a good picture of an actor on set than it is in the studio?

Close Quentin Tarantino is a great example of that. Quentin will give you great behind-the-scenes pictures but he hates having his photograph taken. Actors are happier being photographed discussing something or being animated in some way but they don't like posing. I sometimes have to direct them as if it's a film director.

LWList But if you're doing that then aren't you photographing the director and not the person?

Close That's what I've there to do. If they want Quentin Tarantino as Quentin Tarantino they'll go to Vanity Fair or *Nylon* magazine and shoot Quentin Tarantino at home with his espresso machine. If you want Quentin Tarantino in character then that's my job. **BUT WAITING**

*WITHNAIL & I: THE COMEDY STARRING ROBERT DUNCAN HALL AND JOHN HURT FROM THE LATTER'S HOME FILM, AND MURRAY CLOSE'S FILMSTORY PHOTOGRAPHY





LIVING HISTORY

**LWLIES GETS
A TOUR OF THE
BFI ARCHIVE
AHEAD OF THE
INSTITUTION'S
SEVENTY-FIFTH
ANNIVERSARY
CELEBRATIONS.**

Tucked away in leafy Berkeley, 30 miles in the northwest of the South Bay, is the world's largest film collection. Here in dusty vaults is a system of dizzying complexity in the BFI Archive, containing enough film to stretch around the world six times again. "It's strange that the entire nation is so far from film is stored away in what looks like modest aircraft hangars. Mine kind of invisible in a way," Head Curator Robin Baker says.

Performing, talking or taught unaware, the half-mast stories of countless people out here in ruins of cellulose scrolls covered in meandering. Occasionally a few of the DOO DOO sides are taken from their mental cage, slowly unravelled and offered to breathe again. "For us, our job is where telling stories that have been allowed

to provide "direct information"

The archive was transferred to the Hertfordshire town in 1995 to avoid another fire of London (cellulose nitrate is featured in infamous *Gasford* happenings in its explosively flammable). The millions of specimens include 150,000 works of fabric, 100,000 documents, seven million slides and over 20,000 posters.

There's an institutional uniformity to the place as if an old hospital has been converted into a procession of polite, middle-aged claustrophiles. The Evolucon Floor, patterned brown carpets, windowless rooms and fire doors are softened by pristine wallpaper - an original poster from Powell and Pressburger, a giant war by legend. Exposed in Italia Giardini is a curious case of an



earlyGoodLearn files are the work items which were
done by the earlyGoodLearn team.

"The idea of this place is to preserve and restore films in the best possible conditions so we can then expose them to the general public," explains Communications Manager Eric Roberts. "We're offering a way to look at the society we live in, learn about who we are, and to trace our roots."

"Yeah, but to be honest I wish it weren't,"
interviewer: Practitioner: Client: Staff: Family:



"Do you realize how damaging it is to put him through a prosecutor? It's probably the worst thing you can do to him. As an activist, I'm happy for these files to be shared away and never let you lot read them."

Rasterfish is a delicate, gentle process. For these cantors and rappers, time isn't simply measured, light, voice and music on a big screen. It is an art linked to the refinement of celluloid and the reactions of smoke, nitrate and silver inside. With an exacting dedication, every scratch, tear, heat and pop is removed by these craftsmen in early pumps in the EFI Archive, the luminescent cellos in an original print of *The Red Shoes* are linked in the same frame as a youthful woman's day.

Their latest work has been to restore the first overproduction of *Alice in Wonderland* from 1903. At the time, the film was the biggest production in British film history. A cinema in Hove donated an original print to the BFI but water had seeped into the can and the emulsion had bled.

"We have the original film and we need it as soon as possible to make the restoration of a high-definition television documentary. It's possible to shoot the picture at the stage by using a camera in a chemical that removes unwanted heat from a film like a lid and helps you want to ensure a little physical distress as possible - it's already had enough contact with liquids," says Brynne Davis, Curator of Silent Film. It took months of work to bring the 12-minute piece back from the dead, and it has now received more than 300,000 YouTube hits.

In rooms after rooms, machines both new and old stand side-by-side, still equally used. Film is the child of art, endlessly evolving, and in these understated offices of British eccentricity, the cog of the last great modernism propels cinema back. The journey through which a faded glory must go before it moves to front of us in the BFI Genome is both humbling and comforting. **THE BFI GENOME**



A TEN-MINUTE PROGRAM BY CHICAGO, LONG LEE FILM, CELEBRATING 15 YEARS OF THE "FUNCTIONAL MOVIE" HOSTED BY MARY-PETER STELLERMAN WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF JACQUELINE AND TOMMY THE MOVIE STOLE



EXHIBENT
Presents...



FINDERS

KEEPERS

1984

DIRECTED BY RICHARD LESTER STARRING MICHAEL O'KEEFE BEVERLY D'ANGELO
LOUIS GOSSET, JR. BOX NOTABLES "PROPERTY OF GRAND RAPIDS PUBLIC LIBRARY" STAMP
TAGLINE #FINDER#KEEPERS= BUT#BEWARE#OF#BAD#LOSERS. "TRAILERS DANCE WITH A
STRANGER, JOHNNY DANGEROUSLY TURN 182, AMERICAN BATTENBURG CHERRY-PICK
"HOLLYWOOD'S JUST A PLAYGROUND FOR FAGS, FUCK-UPS AND VIBRATOR SALESMEN"

PROVING

like the moving results of *Exhibit 101* and *Exhibit 102* are tonight but the same side of a different coin, once in a while one of the great and pointless episodes that before these began with their magnetic tug have succeeded through a series of events of confusion, reversal, and so on, and so on, and so on, to produce a final result of something that was high, great, and mostly to leave a small but permanent peaty-white smudge on the unbreakable glass ceiling of Cinema Proper.

SCRAPING

every conceivable plot device and otherwise useful things from the bottom of the barrel. Richard Lester's charming *Finders Keepers* is just such an entry, one that returns to the first light and across the way to an extremely dirty TVO with a one-two of acid substance and a black, scorching humor that would have Samuel Beckett squinting like a pig with a hard-on.



SET

in 1973 for some undelivered reason, the film begins with Michael O'Keefe as supposed assassin and post-humous slaying-film maker Mike Ruggsall in the middle of making the female contingent of his roller derby pack. Quite reasonably ticked off by the awful lack of promise displayed in this entirely terrible opening scene, these have-

been the related delinquents are seen chasing him through the streets of Oakland and into the open arms of the local Police Chief's victims wife. Cue the Chief coming home early for an afternoon episode and discovering his better half during the making-of-shuffle on O'Keefe's back-bay door.

AFTER

using all his griller know-how and silver-tongued devilry to convince himself from this domestic scenario. The film says (1) Mike concludes that things might be about to get a little hot, and so sends his assassin out and sends him to a full Army unit in the middle of the night. A series of surprisingly successful adventures later and he finds himself suddenly charged with escorting the coffin of a dead Mike back to the poor girl's growing family in New York by train.

AS

you will have already guessed, said *Finders Keepers* is, of course, stuffed with stolen text and so the usual happens to tell it, driving, grandstanding, dramatic action, and then, for the first time, the film says (2) Mike's journey to Beverly Hills, California, attending black widow French Shakespeare and Liza Gossard Jr. as king of the chameleons, Gossard's Mike's who leaves offensively through the plot with the remarkable possibility of a Hindu one while dropping such cliché and performance fortune cookies window-boxes as, "Never try to kiss the Queen of the Colosseum," and attempting to stick his head up O'Keefe's back in every opportunity. Like all

unmistakable cannot be approached in a brief, unceremonial and may just not, and when it's over, a nice piece of your soul takes away.



IT

is to the film a serious credit that it is successful. And what the aftermath of Gossard's and the happy ending and continues to travel along. But a lot more just a solid line into a most shocking variety of mistakes. Mike's death is perfectly executed by Brian Donnelly, winking a smoking pipe the size of a cigarette and a young Jim Carrey, giving a few early Hollywood minutes under his belt as a first director. Liza Gossard Jr. The whole thing is then combined with a jarring, low-budget, scene that it takes out actually as by Superhero, and served as a kind of incident.

SO

why wasn't there more of these grubby gems? Why did the moving assembly of *Finders Keepers* & Automobiles and the big budget *David* just of the *Blue* *David* to crowd out such just one example of unoriginality, apart from the fact, it's not a very good idea. What is it? How can it be? What was that about? Why? Why? Why? And where is the best? Questions, questions, questions...
—JAMES M. HART







CULT HERO THOROLD DICKINSON

No. 9

The rule that there is shorts across the studioyard is flouted by the director's crude cutting chair, his knees. A lone figure scurries across the asphalt, but pulled low against the pouring night. He takes the steps to the still water tank at a trot and, with a glance over his shoulder, jams a key into the lock and smashes open the door in one motion.

Inside, the wind and rain are a whisper. The man slides off his overcoat and flicks familiar switches to explore the most hush of machinery. Privately, he takes three cuts of film negative from the shelves and begins to copy them. It's 1941. The film is a secret at daylight you won't have seen, and the movie making it is its director, Thorold Dickinson, the very man of British cinema.

What could possibly have brought this Oxford-educated director's son to the point of pinning his own film in the dead of night? Dickinson wasn't a failure, by the time the coin credits rolled in 1954, he'd made some landmark British films, including *The Arsenal Stadium Mystery* (1940) and *The Queen of Spades* (1948), and written the magnificent montage flap-over *The Matrix Story* (1953). In the 1950s, he brought the study of film to students at the State School of Fine Art, taking ground-breaking directors like Don Lang and the educational artist Raymond Borgeau, and lent Britain's first ever postscripting in film studies. But the daylight-lit director-occupations Dickinson's exuberant status and the conflicting feelings of his fans over what might have been.

Dickinson had progressed in a few years from editing century-old run-ins like *Queen Fisher* (1914) to *He Is* (1934) to directing his first film, *The High Command* (1939), a conventional military thriller set during the Army top brass in West Africa, picks a colonial power structure

down with fear, betrayal and hypocrisy, and prophesied by a morally conflicted officer for whom murder is simply another rung on the career ladder. Dickinson had a great score in Lewis Robinson's novel, but budgetary problems and inexperience meant the film's subject matter wasn't its only problem: the movie was edited, poorly lit and displayed its hapless-hapless production values in every way.

Real success came with *The Arsenal Stadium Mystery*, a tightly defensive postscript narrating a murder at the home of the Queens that captures a free-spirited late '30s London rarely seen in films of the time, and features the real Arsenal squad of 1939. More importantly, it showed that the professional Dickinson had commercial appeal.

When the director was offered an education at Patrick Hamilton's play *Daylight*, he had just three weeks to prepare. The stage production had been dark enough, but *Daylight*, the soulless, claustrophobic film that Dickinson hoped, was astounding. The story of a husband's meticulous attempt to convince his wife of her insanity for the sake of his own career, the movie lives in detail and metaphysical shadow and the chilling weight of modern back and forth between the characters is palpable. The public loved it.

In fact, *Daylight* was too good. Across the Atlantic, the success of the stage version in Broadway had prompted MGM to buy the US film rights. Ingrid Bergman and Charles Boyer were on board and the studio giant wasn't about to let a low-budget British thriller spend the night out, no matter how well received it had been. MGM promptly bought the rights from British National and included a clause that, unless so

it was, illustrate the extent to which they held Dickinson's film, all copies, and the negative, were taken destroyed Dickinson's reactions recorded, except in the survival of his film in the form of a single copy he secretly made just before the MGM bosses obliterated their single print.

The last minute reason has been seen as uncharacteristically misanthropic for the intellectual Dickinson, but he was never comfortable submitting to authority. His two other great films, the searing postscript *Portrait of the Queen of Spades* (just recently listed by Martin Scorsese) and the post-World War II *The Desert People* (1952) both captured the essence of light and being and ended up being among critics and public.

But the love-able movie of the industry had taken their toll and by 1955, with just two features on his directorial resume including work for the Ministry of Information and an avant-garde movie, Dickinson had had enough of the narrow constraints of commercial picture-making. "I've held on all my life in my dark balance, which lets me and lets me the artists and stronger ideas of birth," the movie into making film.

As a director, his last work seems inseparable with Powell and Pressburger and David Lean, but his mature adherence to his own course seems to him had to be reinforced in the twenty-first century. He was an enduring commitment to personal values last named up in his reply in 1941 to David O. Selznick's 2,500-word telegram inviting him to work in Hollywood. It read: "Sorry, there's a war on."

WORDS BY PAUL FAIRCLOUGH



THE ARCHIVE NO. 09 THE BROWN BUNNY 2003

Free movie! Here have polished spiders on track as Vincent Gallo follows up to his 1998 debut *Buffy's 68*. Presented at Cannes in 2003 this can't sustain at a time less than two hours. *The Brown Bunny* was greeted with levels of derision causing Gallo, the film's writer,

producer, writer, producer, designer and director of photography (and, for no longer, camera operator) to apologise for the film at a press conference. Movie one to meet an opportunity to add fuel to the fire. Gallo then explained that the fact that the French critics started to defend it was the salt in the wound.

Gallo later denied issuing such an apology, but nevertheless licked his wounds in the cutting

rooms where he finished his most-maligned project in a mere two-and-a-half days (and, for no longer, camera operator) to apologise for the film at a press conference. Movie one to meet an opportunity to add fuel to the fire. Gallo then explained that the fact that the French critics started to defend it was the salt in the wound.

There was, however, a second critical review, with a small number of the film's fiercest critics including Roger Ebert, with whom Gallo became entangled in a vicious public spat coming to define the film's uncompromising portrait of masculinity in crisis.

Shrouded in accusations of misogyny, *The Brown Bunny* failed to find a theatrical release in the UK, but found favour with more discerning critics such as *The Daily Telegraph's* Stephen Lee, who defended the film, calling the original (and superior) *Cammen* out in process, self-indulgent, essentially misanthropic.

Gallo plays motorcycle racer Bud Clay. Bud has just lost a race in New Hampshire, but clearly feels in his next contest in Southern California. The film closely follows Bud's every action on his journey, capturing him drinking, pumping gas, visiting a pet shop, kissing and then abandoning an anonymous girl (Cherry Pie) and racing his bike on the photo-graphic Marlboro Salt Flats.

Bud is also seemingly searching for the source of his happy memories: a former flame named Daisy

Lemmon (Shirley Duvall), who we see in *Myra Breckinridge*. Arriving in California, Bud deals with prostitutes but stops short of physical interaction. The film concludes on a note of revelation – Bud's emotional and sexual maturing with Daisy in his Los Angeles motel room revealing why he remains isolated in the past.

As an *Elle* critic put it perfectly before film in which his long periods very little happens – as *Cammen* the critic, sensationally applied, after Gallo stopped driving immediately to always his desk – *The Brown Bunny* is also cinema at its most brooding, intense and transcendental.

Unhiding in unbroken, another long take, it's a self-mythologising road movie that parallels the famous, nihilistic spirit of 1950s films including *Five Easy Pieces* and *Two Cops* in its handling of the theme of paradise-invention. Most of the film is shot with a static camera through Bud's dirty, bug-splattered windshield, the endless freeways

winning out excitement and escape (as frequently portrayed in other road movies) but entrepreneurs, self-doubt and confinement.

Gallo is undoubtedly one of cinema's great conceits, but in a central performance of understated, if present, complexity he also lays himself pretty bare, revealing himself to be defenceless and frequently uncomfortable. The final and very graphic sex scene between the two leads is a loveless, unexciting accusation of misogyny and exploitation, but is actually affecting, exactly as it is and tenderly played, serving to the three highlights Bud's awakening vulnerability. One of the most powerful film experiences in recent memory the film suffered by the film's somewhat ironic struggle in keeping with its narrative of seduction.

WORDS BY JASON WOOD

THE FRONTLINE LAWRENCE PEARCE'S DIARY OF A MOVIE INSIDER



There is a quote from Robert Mores that goes something like this: 'He continued to be an infant long after he ceased to be a prodigy. That's pretty much how I've felt during my filmmaking career. After those feelings of being able to take over the world with your bare skin have subsided, you begin to feel like a lost child.'

On December 28 I decided to quit the film industry, or at least directing (although my peers and friends have convinced me to call it an 'indefinite sabbatical'). I may return to directing movies in the future, but for now I'll concentrate on writing. As previous columns have shown, I see the film industry as an ugly ego-driven, smothering and elitist mafia, and I needed to get out to feed my soul and replenish my passion for creativity.

A prime example of my frustrations with the film world, certainly in Britain, is the UK Film Council. I have friend friends who worked within the organization while distributing stories about some of its open and secretive practices.

It's a not-for-profit org., and the Film Council can't have to defend itself. However, whether or not dubious things happen isn't actually what rile me, as I sort of sadly expect it. What really gets my goat is that nearly everybody who works in film has their own story to tell about bad practices and poor standards within the industry as a whole, and yet there is no real anger about it. No real fire, revolution or moral opposition that will tear down the establishment to build a new film industry.

Sure, the brave new world would have its own faults and be despised by not the reformulators themselves (see revolutionaries really anything more than gutturally minded gangsters trying to take over the block?), but at least it would be different and exciting again. I'd have new hope that anything can be achieved and that it's not really all about who you might work in a cocktail bar.

So back to my original quote. The current film industry mainly British eventually left me feeling like a lost child, a prodigy with talents and vision, looking up at all these tall adults that have lost the ability to view the world through the eyes of a child. They lack the passion and philosophical filmmaking, authenticity and natural intensity that of the individual, in an attempt to focus on themselves and marketing and risk management and corporate relationships. There are very few movies that I can watch now without being painfully aware of the fact that every decision made along the way had the influence of money-men, advertising companies, studio deals and producers' egos.

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THE AUBIN CINEMA

Opening 31 May 2018 at Aubin & Wills' new concept store on Redchurch Street, Aubin's 50 seat cinema will host a diverse programme of quality mainstream, 3D and art house films and live events. With comfortable bespoke armchairs and two-seater sofas with cables, food and drink can be bought at the bar.

Tickets will be available online or via the Box Office. Prices start from £13 for armchair seats, £28 for 2-seater sofas and £35 for the deluxe 2-seater sofa.

The programme kicks off with Werner Herzog's *Bad Lieutenant* starring Nicolas Cage in the kind of crazy, lurid performance we haven't seen since *Wild At Heart*: the vibrant and uplifting *Strawberry 3D* featuring the cream of UK dance talent including Diversity, Rudeless and George Sampson. Also showing is *Brothers Bloom*, *Sex And The City 2* and Francis Ford Coppola's *Tetro* with Vincent Gallo, Maribel Verdu and newcomer Aidan Turner.

BAR AND FOOD

You can enjoy drinks during films from the fully licensed bar where cocktails, wine and champagne will be available, with Aubin Bars or Tubs - bars prepared by the Shoreditch House chefs.

PRIVATE HIRE

The Aubin Cinema will be available for private hire from 8pm - 5pm, Tuesday to Friday. For press launches, conferences or private screenings, the cinema is equipped with 25mm, Digital Cinema with 3D capabilities and Dolby Digital Surround sound, and can screen DVD/Blu Ray, Digital, PC/MAC presentations. Refreshments provided by Shoreditch House are available. For more information please contact Joany Evans on 020 7749 4546.

WWW.AUBINCINEMA.COM

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Shoreditch, E2 7DP

0845 654 8486

CHAPTER SIX
INCOMING:
FUTURE
RELEASES
ON THE
LWLIES
RADAR



TOY STORY 3

WRITTEN BY Josh Coates **DIR** Lee Unkrich

CASTING Peter Lars will be heavily assisting down the days to this long-awaited sequel's July release. The full-length maker is now online, complete with 14 new characters, voiced by such actors as Michael Keaton, Kristen Schaal, Timothy Dalton and Ned Beatty. To say we are excited is a gross understatement.

UNTITLED MUPPET PROJECT

WRITTEN BY Jim Henson **DIR** Tim Henson

CASTING Julia Agaros regular Jason Segel is set to star in the Muppets' first big-screen outing since 1999. Segel also wrote the script, which sees him traveling around America trying to reunite the furry band. Henson directed TV's *Flight of the Conchords*, which basically makes this a Muppet movie for the hipster generation.

AUF UND DAUON

WRITTEN BY Coates **DIR** Tim Henson

NEWS Rather than rush straight into the Hollywood A-list, Christoph Waltz has used his newfound muscle to secure a directing gig. *Auf Und DaUon* (aka *Up and Afloat*) is a romantic love in which a reality TV show host falls in love with a comedian. The ingenious Roberts star is still deciding whether or not to act in it.

THE TOURIST

WRITTEN BY David Lynch **DIR** Jonathan Demme

NEWS The Euro thriller penned by our very own Julian Fellowes might be otherwise unmemorable were it not for the star power of Johnny Depp and Angelina Jolie as, respectively, an American tourist and an Israeli agent. Studio Canal's latests ever production, *Das Reich* should be released in time for Christmas. Timothy Dalton and Paul Bettany co-star.

AMERICAN IDIOT

WRITTEN BY Tim Henson

NEWS No sooner has Green Day's latest musical opened on Broadway than Hollywood's cineaste went to make a movie out of it. None other than Ben Hanks is set to produce this coming-of-age story set to songs from Green Day's, er, 'normal' (the punk about American idiot) 'You couldn't make it up.'

PAWN SACRIFICE

WRITTEN BY David Lynch **DIR** Jonathan Demme

NEWS After snagging The Social Network - watch for a trailer soon - David Fincher will begin work on the tragic tale of troubled chess Grandmaster Bobby Fischer, starring Tobey Maguire. Fischer famously won a Cold War era chess game against the Soviet Union's Boris Spassky before succumbing to paranoia and ending himself in Iceland.

THE FIRST AVENGER: CAPTAIN AMERICA

WRITTEN BY Joe Johnston **DIR** Joe Johnston

CASTING *Preachin' alert!* Chris Evans has signed on as the eponymous patriotic hero of comic-book lore. Before you ask how Radio City's resident audience will cope, consider that it's the other Chris Evans, who starred in Danny Boyle's *Sliver* among others. Still, Jeremy Renner would have been a smarter pick.

THE MASTER

WRITTEN BY Paul Haggis **DIR** Paul Haggis

NEWS Universal has snatched Anderson's Scientology movie, which was to star Philip Seymour Hoffman as the L. Ron Hubbard-esque leader of a cult in the 1950s, with *The Hurt Locker*'s Jeremy Renner as his protégé. Let's hope Anderson finds a studio willing to risk it, because this sounds great.

THE ILLUSIONIST

DIRECTED BY STEVE DILLON (2011)

NEWS Sylvia Chant's gorgeous-looking, serene face has earned controversy. Based on an unproduced Jacques Tati screenplay written by the late master as a gift to his estranged daughter, Helge Marie-Jeanne Schiel, it had to wait until Schiel's death to be given a screen credit. Fancie dance aside, the film—about an ensemble re-enacted by a dancer-mimic with a young girl—unlocks pretty special.

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE IV

DIRECTED BY J.J. ABRAMS (2011)

MOVIE All in the illusionist last chapter in the Mission: Impossible series, we couldn't have been less excited about this—until we found out that Tom Cruise and J.J. Abrams are reportedly helping up filmmaker director Brad Pitt to take charge. The pair have also talked to our very own Edgar Wright. Sounds interesting.

NORWEGIAN WOOD

DIRECTED BY AN HUNG (2010)

MOVIE After every year of waiting to sell the movie rights for his brother's late Japanese novelist Haruki Murakami's heavily altered Victorian director An HUNG. This is making an adaptation of perhaps his most beloved work, a coming-of-age tale set in 1960s Tokyo. Filming has now wrapped, and Jojo Greenwood of Redhead is scoring.

WALL STREET 2: MONEY NEVER SLEEPS

DIRECTED BY OLIVER STONE (2010)

MOVIE Stone's sequel to his 1983 classic looks quite good, with what promises to be a return to form from Michael Douglas. Sadly, the film's release has been pushed back to September. Why? Something to do with the World Cup taking soccer audiences away, we hear.



GRAVITY

DIRECTED BY ALFONSO CUARON (2013)

CASTING Alfonso Cuarón Jr. can find space between being his own big budget producer (Don Mar and Sherlock Holmes), he is not to play an unusual stand-in on either space in Alfonso Cuarón's sci-fi thriller, which sounds like a 3D adaptation of Solaris. Angeline Zide will not now be appearing alongside him.

UNTITLED FRENCH WOODY ALLEN PROJECT

DIRECTED BY WOODY ALLEN (2011)

CASTING Even at the age of 74, the workaholic New Yorker shows no signs of slowing down. Filming starts soon in Paris on his latest, starring Owen Wilson, Marion Cotillard and, rumour has it, one Carlo Bazzani. So far, in the romance, Allen's You Will Meet A Tall Dark Stranger starring Antonio Banderas, opens in the autumn.

LET ME IN

DIRECTED BY OUSAMA MANSOUR (2011)

CASTING Although we are opposed to any number of Ousama Mansour's children Let Me In. The Right One In, the does sound like they are doing a sequel. Ousama Mansour will play adolescent vampire Abby, while The Road's Kodi Smit-McPhee is the boy with whom she falls in love. Ousama Mansour's director Marjorie makes the holes.

AKIRA

DIRECTED BY KATSUMASA MURAKAMI (2013)

MOVIE Fans of Kurosawa Ousama's classic series will be disappointed to learn that Allen and Albert Hughes are prepping a live-action film adapting all six books in the series. Given the Hughes' history of adapting beloved comic books—From Hell, anyone?—there is much to be worried about. Leo DiCaprio 'produces'.



GAINSBOURG (VIE HEROIQUE)

WORTH IT Jean Reno (R) June 2011

PREVIEW A saucy nod to the French musician and rooster is now online. Eric Wanczarek plays the lighthearted Gaius while Lucie Arnoux is an absolute ringer for Brigitte Bardot. Best screen Lucy Gordon, who plays Jane Birkin, is expected to play post-production

TRON LEGACY

WORTH IT Josh Hartnett (R) December 2011

PREVIEW The new full-length trailer for the sequel reflects on the neon lighting and dark design of the original, complete with a rousing soundtrack version of Cliff Bridges' song "Over the Top" by C3. With all the hype over this, it's strange to think it doesn't come out until Christmas. We say: this year's Xmas

UNTITLED MIDNIGHT RUN SEQUEL

WORTH IT TBA 2011

PREVIEW Robert De Niro is reportedly keen to reprise his role as the misanthropic bounty hunter Jack Wile. For this sequel to the 1985 comedy classic, Charles Grodin, who played his foil, has since moved from acting. Adam Sandler, Alec Baldwin and John C. Reilly are being talked up as potential replacements.

MAKING JACK FALCONE

WORTH IT TBA 2011

PREVIEW Details from the underscheduled. McQueen, Rebecca Del Toro will play FBI undercover agent Jack Garbo (aka Jack Falcone) in the Donnie Brasco-style true-life drama about the man who brought down the Gambino crime family. Steven Soderbergh produces, but will apparently not direct

JEFF WHO LIVES AT HOME

WORTH IT Matt Jones (R) July 2011

PREVIEW The Duplex brothers follow the Standalone success of Cyrus with this comedy starring Jason Segel as a man who realizes he's doing while running an errand for his asexual mother, John Malkovich and Jason Reitman produce while The Hangover's Ed Helms has a starring role

PIRANHA 3-D

WORTH IT Steven R. McQueen (R) August 2011

PREVIEW Now that James Cameron has changed the way cinema will be viewed forever, we can look forward to cheap knock-offs like this. Piranha 3-D, with Cameron from the likes of Christopher Lloyd, Kelly Brook and Richard Dreyfuss, this could at least be fun. Could it be?

THE INVENTION OF HUGO CABRET

WORTH IT Ben Barnes (R) TBA

PREVIEW Continuing his line across genres, Ben Barnes, Steven R. McQueen is back in his new series. It's a story about a boy named Hugo Cabaret, who lives in a clock tower in London. The film involves around a 12-year-old who lives in the hollow walls of a Paris train station during the 1930s, but it's a show, in part, in London. And in 3D to boot.

QUARTET

WORTH IT Sam Mendes (R) 2011

PREVIEW The 70-year-old actor legend is to direct his first picture: an adaptation of Ronald Harwood's West End comedy starring aging comedy Maggie Smith, Albert Finney and Tom Courtenay. The BBC production will film later this year. A word of advice for the first-time director: "Panic!"

KANE & LYNCH

WORTH IT Peter Dinklage (R)

PREVIEW James Fox and Bruce Willis will play the roles of the adaptation of the post-apocalyptic videogame. Willis plays a mysterious who has 72 hours to save his wife and daughter and disarm a doomsday device, with Fox as his reluctant partner. Aren't they getting too old for this stuff?

ZOOLOANER 2

WORTH IT Jon Hamm (R) 2011

PREVIEW It's been nine years since Ben Stiller first played the really, really good-looking Derek Zoolander. Now he and David Spade's Thelma are working on a new script, due to film later this year. Derek Zoolander hasn't signed up yet, but Jon Hamm should be playing the villain.

PREDATORS

WORTH IT Michael Bay (R) Summer 2010

PREVIEW The first sequel for Michael Bay's Predator franchise actually makes it look quite good, against all expectations. It appears to stick to the armed men running around the jungle premise of James Cameron's original. Action, thrills and suspense. Predator is a

W.E.

WORTH IT James McQueen (R)

PREVIEW Ryan McGovern has been cast as Edward VIII in Michael W. E. Wills' historical movie. Up in the air's film. Wills is to play the American divorcee for whom the King abdicated the throne during the 1930s. The material got his co-scripted and will direct for the second time (you mean you didn't watch 2005's *Harry and Meghan*?)

DARFUR

WORTH IT John Dahl (R) Summer 2010

PREVIEW A harrowing drama about journalism sounded in Sudan sounds like the sort of thing George Clooney might be doing, not someone's first movie. Dan Aykroyd, Edward Norton, and Kevin Costner are in the frame, too.

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